



AN ASSESSMENT OF ETHNIC RELATIONS IN MACEDONIA

USAID/Macedonia

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USAID commissioned this assessment primarily to investigate the drivers and inhibitors of conflict between Macedonia's Albanian and Macedonian populations, and recommend strategic interventions to mitigate conflict.

Conclusions and Recommendations: The team concluded that the most important interventions for preventing conflict are continued EU and US monitoring and dialogue with Macedonian political elites. These are diplomatic initiatives, not development assistance ones. Diplomacy is particularly needed to make progress on language issues, decentralization reform and the citizenship issues. Nonetheless, there may be a role for development assistance in these areas, once agreements are formulated. USAID flexibility, demonstrated in its willingness to provide funding for the new university, should be preserved.

The team believes that much of USAID's current program *indirectly* contributes to building economic and political systems that will ensure peaceful coexistence in Macedonia. USAID/Macedonia also supports programs that either could or do *directly* address ethnic issues, including decentralization and the new university. The latter two respond to key ethnic Albanian demands and represent an opportunity to diminish grievances. In considering the possibility of adding new programs, the team finds that there are three types of strategies, depending on how USAID one weighs the following causal factors: manipulation of ethnicity by political elites, in part by strengthening fragile democratic institutions which cannot hold leaders accountable or adequately channel interests; disparities that increase susceptibility to political mobilization; and limited interaction between ethnic groups. The team believes political mobilization contributes most to current tensions. The team concludes that there is less merit in funding additional programs of interpersonal interaction, except perhaps among youth and high school students, for reasons given below. A fourth approach would be to support an increase in knowledge about ethnic relations in Macedonia in order to support the selection of better programs. Some of the team's more important programming options are summarized below:

Reducing manipulation of ethnicity by elites/strengthening the accountability of leaders and democratic institutions:

* Media: 1) The team recommends the creation of a media monitoring project. This could be a one-time or periodic research project or a continuous service. It would follow majority and minority language media for unflattering and/or inflammatory coverage of other ethnic groups. Monitoring during and after election campaigns would be particularly important. It would publish reports and hold occasional seminars and news-briefings of its own to call journalists and media owners to account.

2) Private Albanian mass media news consists mostly of rebroadcasts from Tirana and Kosovo. There is very little independent news programming. This means that Macedonia's Albanian population confronts on a daily basis the problems of Kosovo and Albania but learns little about Macedonia's problems and attempts to confront them. Some support for Albanian-language news broadcasts (which could be shared among stations) could be useful. It could contribute to a focus on broader issues, in contrast to a narrow focus on minority rights.

3) Due in part to language differences, there seem to be no media that serve a genuinely integrative function across ethnic groups. There is hardly any way to carry on a genuine national debate. Multiethnic journalism projects that publish or broadcast pieces/programs in all languages are a good start but more could be done.

* The DG assessment team has recommended a broader civil society program, as a way to check growing politicization and political party domination. Civil society groups exploring interests that appeal across

ethnic lines, such as women's political participation, can put pressure on politicians to pursue non-ethnic themes. One possibility would be to investigate the possibility of creating one or more genuinely multi-ethnic NGOs, either issue-based, municipality-based or both. Another would be for regional groups that could help local NGOs develop their ideas for multi-ethnic activities (which could be defined as either two NGOs of different groups working together on a joint project or one NGO serving more than one community) and then would give grants for those projects. Towns which might be appropriate for such a program include Tetovo, Stip and Kocani (where the Roma population has difficulties), Struga, Kicevo, Debar and Resen.

* The DG assessment team has also recommended support for political party development. The ethnic assessment team also believes that assisting parties to develop organizational structures that could reduce the unchecked power of political leaders is important. Greater organizational "density" might increase the range of ideas that can find expression within each party, reducing the focus on ethnicity. Assisting parties over time to develop platforms and issues is also important because bread and butter issues can serve as a counterweight to a steady diet of ethnic outbidding.

Addressing Disparities and Grievances:

Disparities reinforce group identity, and thus need to be addressed. However, gains for one community are likely to be seen as losses for another. The benefit and loss calculation may be complex and needs to be thought through. Compensation may be required for those who are actual or imaginary losers. Considering the inclusion of some palliatives to address more directly economic grievances that grow out of the economic and civil service reform processes has merit, if the mission has adequate funding.

* Skills support for unemployed youth. Unemployed youth would need help on the psychological aspects of dealing with unemployment, job search skills, and skills that would qualify them for a job. Part of the point here would be to address an audience that may be particularly susceptible to mobilization along ethnic lines.

* The team heard of one program in Gostiver, now completed, that targeted the children of social welfare families. Run by Albanian, Turkish and Macedonian women's groups, the program divided children into four age groups, from 5 to 15, and ran a four-month after-school program for each group. Staff used the different languages of the children and translation was provided when needed. In addition to working on ethnic harmony and providing tutoring, they worked on the psychological fears that result from their families' marginalized status. Replicating this program could make sense.

* USAID should consider providing U.S. Bureau of the Census monitors for the next census, if needed. This would include monitoring the design, survey planning and implementation, as well as data entry and analysis.

* USAID should discuss with other donors the issue of Macedonian perceptions of Western favoritism toward the Albanian population. All donors have programs that benefit the Macedonian population. It could simply be a matter of providing better public information about donor activities.

Findings: While Macedonia is a multi-ethnic society, two groups, Albanians and Macedonians, predominate. Social, geographic and political cleavages tend to reinforce the basic ethnic one. The political system is organized largely along ethnic lines. Political parties are ethnic parties, the mixed proportional representation electoral system encourages ethnic voting, the media and civil society are segmented, the civil service is heavily Macedonian in makeup, and education is separate below the university level. Macedonia appears locked into the political system that revolves around ethnicity, rather than one that emphasizes civic identity and loyalty to a set of political ideas. There are few institutions that can serve an integrative function and can hold up to the harsh light of day rumors, allegations, and the

interpretations of particular events. At the same time, the transition to a democratic has offered new opportunities to ethnic Albanians, in particular, to organize to overcome a legacy of discrimination. State institutions though are weak and cannot easily accommodate demands. In such a context, ethnic conflict is an ever-present possibility. Despite many adverse factors – a deteriorating economy, hostile neighbors, and violent conflict in the region among them – tensions have largely been contained. The risk of instability today is less than it was from 1991-8. At the moment, within-group conflict seems more pressing than between-group conflict. Each community is represented by more than one political party. The electoral system ensures that coalition governments are a fact of life. The two coalitions in power since 1991 have included an ethnic Albanian party. The coalition in power since 1998 seems to be a genuine partnership, and elites on both sides have shown both restraint and flexibility. The DPA, the Albanian coalition member, has not only influence but significant power.

Ethnic Albanians have won a number of concessions. Recent polls show that the majority feels optimistic about the future. They continue to press for certain demands, but are by and large using democratic channels to do so. In contrast, many ethnic Macedonians feel pessimistic about the future. They see every concession as a loss for their own community. **The following factors are of greatest concern:**

- * Increasing high levels of political mobilization, political party domination and unregulated party competition. While use of ethnic outbidding to gain political advantage is kept now within certain limits, it does exacerbate tensions. With elections three years out of every four, the pot is kept simmering. Many informants expressed concern about growing politicization of society, even in schools. It seems important to try to counter this degree of mobilization, which can easily revolve around ethnic demands and grievances. If election fraud, which seemed fairly widespread during the recent local elections, grows, it may force more desperate opposition parties into increased use of ethnic rhetoric. If they cannot be certain that there really is a chance for alternation in power, there would be scant rationale for them to play by the democratic rules. Increasing pluralism (in terms of issues, agendas and political choices) on the Albanian side seems is also important, in light of the strengthening DPA hold. This is not simply so that Albanians have more choices but because some degree of division may be important to preclude the community from being identified as a “king-maker” in elections, as they were in the last presidential elections.

- * The increasing sense of ethnic Macedonian vulnerability. There are many factors responsible for this: concessions on key Albanian demands, economic decline which has undermined the Macedonian sense of superiority, regional instability, the sense that the West favors Albanians, government corruption, and the growing concern that the country’s political processes are increasingly plagued by fraud. The Macedonians see themselves as a small, unique population surrounded by hostile neighbors. They explain that the Albanians have turn to Kosovo and Albania while they have only this small state. This sense of vulnerability could mean that ethnic Macedonians would be less willing to compromise on future Albanian demands, potentially pushing the Albanians in a more radical direction and making both groups more susceptible to mobilization around ethnic issues.

- * Competition over scarce economic resources and high levels of unemployment (especially among youth). While the economy is now growing, the damage of a slow transition has been profound. Ethnic Macedonians have particularly suffered in the closure of state owned enterprises or their privatization, and sometimes continued unprofitable operation. Safety nets are inadequate and poverty is very high. While Albanians too suffer from unemployment, they have greater remittances coming in from abroad. They have also been able to take advantage of the booming trade with Kosovo. Economic competition heightens ethnic tensions. Of particular concern is the very high level of youth unemployment. Youth who have no skills and perceive no future have little stake in society. As with skinheads throughout Europe, they are easy to organize around ugly ideologies. Economic growth will address this risk with time, but these youth appear to receive little attention now and they may lack skills for a market economy.

* The ultimate disposition of Kosovo. It is possible that an independent democratic Kosovo with open borders to Macedonia could help stabilize Macedonia. It would provide an additional outlet for educational, employment and cultural opportunities for Albanians. On the other hand, a Kosovo that remains a province of a still-not-very democratic but post-Milosevic Serbia could be destabilizing.

* Census and Citizenship. Progress in reexamining the fairness of the Citizenship Law is required. The current law seems too restrictive in granting minorities citizenship. In addition, some serious study of the number of minorities who have rights to citizenship under the current law but are unable to obtain papers should be conducted and a solution developed to address the problem. A census is scheduled for next spring. This could provoke ethnic tensions, even with deft handling by the coalition government. If the data collection itself does not become controversial, then the results will most certainly be.

* Language. Ethnic Albanians want to create a genuinely bilingual society. Macedonians are adamantly opposed to learning Albanian and are fearful that the creation of a range of Albanian-language institutions will create the kind of parallel society that emerged in Kosovo during the 1990s. Some compromises have been made vis-à-vis the Pedagogical Faculty, the planned tri-lingual university, and the use of Albanian in local administration wherever ethnic Albanians are in a majority. Additional progress will be hotly contested.

I. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY OF THE ASSESSMENT

A. SCOPE OF WORK

The team was asked to undertake the following tasks:

1. Review studies about ethnic groups in Macedonia, emphasizing the sources of tension between the groups. Conduct key informant interviews as needed. Prioritize sources of tension, to the extent possible.
2. Review activities and lessons learned from conflict prevention activities in the region and elsewhere as useful.
3. Provide a description of the ethnic minorities existing in Macedonia, their geographic distribution, and major issues affecting their integration into Macedonian society.
4. Recommend a strategy that AID could undertake to address major issues affecting relations between the ethnic groups, taking into account the areas in which USAID is already involved.
5. Recommend ways that USAID can articulate its conflict prevention efforts in its new strategy.

In the team's first briefing with the mission, it was decided that the bulk of attention would be devoted to ethnic Albanian-ethnic Macedonian relations, because the mission's primary concern was political stability. It was also decided that much more limited attention would be devoted to the problems of the Roma, given their very marginalized status.

B. METHODOLOGY

While in the U.S., the team interviewed experts knowledgeable about Macedonia and also collected data about projects designed to prevent or mitigate conflict in the region. The team also developed a framework for analyzing ethnic relations, drawing on the work of Dr. Michael Lund of MSI. Once in country, the team relied upon key informant interviews¹; discussions with the DG assessment team (which was able to explore political processes in more detail); and documentary evidence in the form of opinion surveys, project reports and evaluations, and scholarly studies.

No surprisingly, perspectives differed. Informants disagreed when asked to describe current ethnic relations and trends. Psychologists and sociologists saw the trendline as worrying, with group boundaries solidifying and resentments growing. By contrast, political scientists were positive. They felt that the political system was handling competing demands. Ethnic Albanian informants were more optimistic about the possibilities of managing conflict in the future than were ethnic Macedonians. There did seem to be a more uniform consensus that the country needed to work toward a sense of broader civic identity but that the obstacles to this were considerable.

The team believes that cultural differences and group cohesion, disparities, competition over resources, and misperceptions about the other group can all fuel tensions and spark incidents. However, the recent

¹ The team did not talk with political leaders (except for the mayor of Tetovo) because the democracy assessment team was interviewing key politicians and legislators. Key informants are listed at the back of the report.

history of the Balkans suggests that it is the manipulation of these factors by political elites as well as the weaknesses of democratic institutions in channeling conflicts of interest that are the most important factors in sparking wider mobilization and violence. The relationship between elites and institutions on the one hand and group discontent on the other is a complex one and not well understood. Under what circumstances do groups choose to respond to ethnic entrepreneurs, who seek power through the creation or heightening of community grievances? We hope to describe some of the particulars of the Macedonia case below.

This framework used to analyze ethnic relations is divided into six parts: social structure and nature of inter-group relations; socio-economic conditions; leaders and political mobilization; the role of public institutions and processes; and the role of external forces and players. We try to examine the differences that define each group and their relations with the other and how those differences interact with economic, political, and other structures to drive or mitigate conflict. In this analysis, we are most concerned with the risks of conflict over the next five years although we do pay attention to factors that may incite or diminish conflict over the medium to longer term. We also look at existing efforts to improve group relations and evaluate possible programs and approaches for USAID. The last section of the paper addresses the Roma.

II. CONTOURS OF ALBANIAN-MACEDONIAN RELATIONS: DRIVERS AND INHIBITORS OF CONFLICT

A. INTRODUCTION

Macedonia is a multiethnic society in which two groups, Albanians and Macedonians, predominate. Social, geographic and political cleavages tend to reinforce ethnic ones. The country's recent history as a titular republic for ethnic Macedonians in the ethnically-segmented federal state of Yugoslavia sparked at independence the creation of a state organized largely along ethnic lines. The new state also inherited a legacy of discrimination against ethnic Albanians that the latter were determined to overcome. The constitution describes the state as the expression of the ethnic Macedonians,² with Macedonian as the state language. However, other "nationalities" have been granted citizenship rights, and these rights are more generous than those offered by Latvia and Estonia to their Russian minorities.³ Political parties are organized along ethnic lines, the mixed proportional representation electoral system encourages ethnic voting, the media and civil society are segmented, the civil service is heavily Macedonian in makeup, and education is separate below the university level. Macedonia is locked into a political system that revolves around ethnicity, rather than one that emphasizes civic identity and loyalty to a set of political ideas and institutions. There are few institutions that can serve an integrative function and can hold up to the harsh light of day rumors, allegations, and the biased interpretations of particular events. In such a context, ethnic conflict remains a possibility.

Perhaps surprisingly, Macedonia has shown a remarkable ability to manage ethnic tensions. Despite many adverse factors – a deteriorating economy, hostile neighbors, violent conflict and instability in the region, and fragile political institutions for channeling demands – tensions have largely been contained and have rarely spilled over into violence. The risk of instability today seems less than it was in the 1991-8 period. For the time being at least, within-group tensions seems more pressing than between-group conflict. In a recent poll, stratified along ethnic lines, fewer than 5% of ethnic Macedonians saw

² To the dismay of ethnic Albanians, the state is represented by cultural symbols that resonate only with ethnic Macedonians. One reaction, the defiant use of the eagle-clad Albanian flag, brought about a political crisis in 1997.

³ In both countries, a knowledge of the state language is an essential requirement for citizenship.

interethnic relations as one of the two most serious problems facing the country. While a higher percentage of ethnic Albanians saw communal relations as vitally important, that percentage was still well under 20%.

The Albanian population has won concessions that suggest that future compromise is possible. The survey quoted above demonstrates that ethnic Albanians feel positive about the future, with almost two-thirds believing that the country is headed in the right direction.⁴ The team's interviews confirm this optimism. Many Albanians believe that they have made progress in meeting essential demands and so they feel more positive about their prospects in this society. They continue, however, to have demands related to: (1) group status, involving their status as a minority group and the demand to be recognized as a constitutive nation; (2) language rights, reflecting the demand for Albanian as the second official language; (3) educational rights, demanding higher education in the Albanian language; and (4) discriminatory practices, improving the representation of ethnic Albanians in political office and the legislature, the civil service, the armed forces and police, and the justice system. They have probably made the most progress in the area of higher education.

While opinion is not uniform, many ethnic Macedonians see concessions as a loss for their community or as the thin end of the wedge to Albanian separatism. The survey quoted earlier suggests that ethnic Macedonians feel pessimistic about the future. Two-thirds of those polled think that the country is headed in the wrong direction. While such pessimism is produced by many factors, economic decline⁵ and the increasingly unpalatable nature of party competition among them, the team's interviews confirmed that many ethnic Macedonians feel increasingly vulnerable.

B. SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

1. Demographics

Ethnic groups everywhere show concern about shifts in the demographic balance. Macedonia is no different. Demographics drive negotiations over political representation, employment, educational reform, media programming, the number of minority language schools, university quotas, citizenship, the upcoming census, and the use of national symbols. Of most concern to ethnic Macedonians is the higher birthrate of ethnic Albanians. There is considerable fear that the latter will outnumber the former in the not so distant future.⁶

According to the official 1994 census figures, funded and monitored by the international community, Macedonia is home to 1.3 million Slavic Macedonians (66.5%), 443,000 ethnic Albanians (23%), and several smaller groups.⁷ These figures are highly contested among ethnic Albanians, who claim they constitute between 30 and 40% of the population and that many Albanians were missed in the count because the restrictive citizenship laws discriminate against ethnic Albanians from Kosovo and other parts of the former Yugoslavia. It is true that since 1991, there has been a steady flow of ethnic Albanians

⁴ They show much higher levels of support for economic reform and the government than do ethnic Macedonians.

⁵ The percentage of ethnic Macedonians who ranked unemployment as one of the three most pressing problems facing the country is almost twice that of ethnic Albanians.

⁶ A Freedom in the World report (2000) projects that ethnic Albanians will constitute a majority of Macedonia's population by the year 2025.

⁷ The smaller groups consist of 77,000 Turks (4.8%), 44,000 Roma (2.7%), 39,000 ethnic Serbs (2.2%), and 8,500 Vlachs (0.4%). The number of Roma is considered to be much higher because many Roma state their nationality as Albanian or Turkish to escape discrimination. According to the 1994 census, 2.6% identified themselves as "others" and are "Yugoslavs" and people who did not list themselves as members of a particular ethnic group.

migrating from Kosovo, particularly among elites. The 1999 Kosovo conflict also saw the influx of more than 300,000 refugees, and although most of them returned to Kosovo, an unspecified number, perhaps as much as 10,000 or more, remained in Macedonia.

Geographic divisions reinforce ethnic ones. Ethnic Albanians live predominantly in Skopje and western Macedonia, along the borders with Kosovo and Albania. In three newly formed municipalities in the Tetovo-Gostivar region called Pollog, ethnic Albanians make up 99.6% of the population. Ethnic Albanians are also now a majority in some of the municipalities of Kicevo, Debar, and Struga. They comprise 99.8% of the population in the municipalities of Negotino-Polosko and Velesta, located near Struga. Skopje, with more than 100,000 ethnic Albanians, has the largest single concentration of Albanians. In Kumanovo and its surrounding areas, which are more ethnically diverse, Albanians are one third of the population. In other regions of Macedonia, particularly in the central and eastern parts, there are very few Albanians.

The ethnic Albanian population is predominantly rural although rural-urban migration over time is changing the ethnic makeup of some towns. Gostivar, for example, has become a more predominantly Albanian town. In ethnically mixed towns, neighborhoods may be separate or mixed. That ethnic Albanians are still largely rural while the ethnic Macedonian population is proportionately more urban reinforced the ethnic cleavage and encourages stereotyping.

2. Group Cohesion, Social Interactions and Perceptions

Ethnic Albanians and ethnic Macedonians each feel a strong sense of group identity. They are divided by cultural, religious, and social factors. Ethnic Albanians in particular show strong group cohesion. As a mainly rural population, they are more traditional, hierarchical and likely to show deference to leaders. Little interaction occurs between the two groups, except in mixed population areas and then the interaction may be involuntary. It may actually feed tensions rather than reducing them. Misperceptions about “the other” abound, driven partly by the lack of knowledge but also in turn causing a reluctance to engage. There is a tendency for people to see interactions in group terms rather than individual ones.⁸ Relations in mixed communities often seem strained. In a survey still in process, preliminary findings suggest that ethnic Macedonians in mixed towns feel endangered and are not open to communication with Albanians.⁹ By contrast, Albanians are more open to such communication, even when in the clear minority. In mixed communities in which they are the majority, ethnic Macedonians tend to be more open, because they feel less overwhelmed. Language is the major barrier to increased interaction. The issue of who must learn which language is fundamental to inter-group relations and which group must assimilate. Neither group wants to learn the language of the other. Ethnic Albanians have fought hard for additional language rights.¹⁰

⁸ In an analysis of the attitudes of children, researcher Mirjana Nagcevska found that ethnic Macedonian children are consistently most negative about Albanian children. Albanian children are consistently most negative about Roma children, with ethnic Macedonian children ranking as second least preferred.

⁹ Researchers at the Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research are conducting the survey.

¹⁰ For example, ethnic Macedonian parents opposed the organization of Mozaik, a bilingual kindergarten in Kumanovo, because they were offended by the notion that Albanian would be given equal status. There appeared to be social pressure on Macedonian parents NOT to enroll their children. Albanian parents were for their part ready to enroll their children (even though the kindergarten was in a Macedonian neighborhood) because the only alternate kindergartens used Macedonian as the language of instruction and because they were pleased to see a key Albanian demand given some acknowledgment. Macedonian parents did eventually enroll their children but only once it was clear that the quality of the education was greatly superior to all other kindergartens in town.

The situation in mixed schools can be particularly tense. Students, while using the same facilities and studying the same curricula, have no formal points of interaction. Ordinary schoolyard fights often acquire an ethnic cast when they occur between children of different groups. Serious problems are more likely at the high school level than in primary schools. In the first three months of 1999, there were fourteen reported clashes between ethnic Albanian and ethnic Macedonian high school students, none of whom had a previous police record. There were even signs that some of the clashes were supported by teachers. In 1996, 34% of adolescents reported that it would be difficult to be friends with someone who was not of their group. Ten years earlier, fewer than 4% had given that answer.¹¹

Ethnic Macedonians question the loyalty of ethnic Albanians to the Macedonian state. The evidence they point to includes the boycott of the referendum on independence in 1991, the ethnic Albanian referendum on territorial autonomy in January 1992, the boycott of the 1991 census, and the contesting of the 1994 census, as well as a few incidents of violence. Ethnic Macedonians also perceive that ethnic Albanians still continue to take more interest in Kosovo and Albania than their own country.¹²

Several misperceptions hold sway among ethnic Macedonians. Particularly since NATO's intervention in Kosovo in 1999, ethnic Macedonians believe that ethnic Albanians are favored by the international community.¹³ They think that international NGOs and donors are only interested in financially supporting programs that are directed toward the needs of ethnic Albanians. Some Macedonians interviewed voiced the sentiment that the gap has increased between the two ethnic groups since the Kosovo war with the donors continued emphasis on the ethnic Albanian community, their practice of hiring all-Albanian staff,¹⁴ and the more substantial involvement of ethnic Albanians businesses in the reconstruction of Kosovo.

There is also increased resentment on the part of ethnic Macedonians. They think that too many concessions have been made by the ruling party, VMRO¹⁵, to its coalition partner, the DPA, regarding higher education, quotas, and law and order issues. The ethnic Macedonian community also has a tendency to discount the ethnic Albanian vote, associating ethnic Albanians with election fraud and blaming them for the election irregularities and violence during the September 2000 local elections. Moreover, ethnic Albanians are often associated with certain kinds of "lawless behavior" such as reckless driving, avoiding the payment of taxes, smuggling activities, corruption, and organized crime.

In general, ethnic Albanians voice that there has been an improvement in interethnic relations. This is largely due to progress in political representation, their ability to advance their agenda, particularly vis-a-vis higher education, and fewer incidents of police action against ethnic Albanians. Ethnic Albanians still feel that it is problematic for them to cross into Macedonian society, particularly when it comes to equal access to employment and education. With respect to access to public spaces, the picture is mixed. In Skopje, perhaps because of its size and sophistication, ethnic Albanians feel that they can freely visit cafes and nightclubs in the predominately Macedonian part of the city. In predominately ethnic Albanians

¹¹ Unpublished conference paper by Dr.Emilija Simovska, "Macedonia: a View on Ethnic Relations," undated.

¹² Nicolena Kenig who has written an MA thesis on ethnic identity formation finds that ethnic Albanians tend to identify themselves most closely with Kosovo. Interview, 4/10/00.

¹³ They note a double standard, seeing that Europe and the U.S. show no interest in protecting the rights of ethnic Macedonians in Greece.

¹⁴ This is the not surprising result of the need to communicate with refugees.

¹⁵ The principal political parties include VMRO, which started as a Macedonian nationalist party and is headed by Georgievski; the DPA, which began life as more of a extremist Albanian party and is headed by Arben Xhaferi; the PDP, which is the DPA's main rival for Albanian support; and the SDSM, the socialist party which was in power until 1998. There are other parties as well, but the only multi-ethnic party is the Democratic Alternative, which is very small.

towns like Gostivar and Tetovo, each ethnic group is more likely to frequent its own establishments and public spaces are much more segregated. The team heard of cafes in Gostivar that both groups shared, but each group sat on its own side. While occupying the same room, there was little mixing.

On a more positive note, it is useful to note that there is an absence of long-standing historical animosities among all ethnic groups, such as existed between Serbs and Croats due to memories of World War II. From her research on group perceptions, psychologist Violeta Beska concluded that while ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians each perceive the other group as aggressive, tests revealed traits of non-aggressiveness in both groups. More worrying are recent data showing a growing willingness to use violent means to resolve conflicts.

3. The Status of Women in Society

While women from all ethnic groups are active in civil society, they generally are absent from political and economic leadership positions. For example, out of the 120 MPs, only 8 are women. Local government representation is also scant. Several constraints limit women's access to political office: lower levels of education; lack of support services that might free time from domestic duties; stereotypes of leadership held by voters and women; lack of models and resources; conservative and hierarchical constraints within the party structures; and lack of knowledge as to how and where to run campaigns.

Ethnic Macedonian women face fewer obstacles to their advancement than do ethnic Albanian, Turkish, and Roma women. Low levels of education, early marriage, high birthrates, and tradition account for differences in status and access. As members of an ethnic minority, ethnic Albanian women additionally suffer many of the other disadvantages of their male counterparts. Urban-rural differentials are also important when comparing status. Urban women, regardless of ethnicity, may have more in common with each other than with rural women and vice-versa.

Ethnic Albanian parents, particularly in rural areas do not always respect laws on mandatory schooling. Girls may finish primary school and proceed no further. One primary school teacher estimated that the illiteracy rate among Albanian women was 20-30%.¹⁶ The number of ethnic Albanian girls attending secondary school is increasing but their drop out rate is higher than the rate for boys. Although figures are difficult to verify, it is estimated that at least half of the student population at Tetovo University is female, an encouraging sign. One informant noted with great pleasure that Albanian girls in the most recent graduating class at the Tetovo academic high school had done very well on the university entrance exams. She felt that Albanian females were now passing the exams in greater numbers than male students.

Poor education and inadequate government health services contribute to higher fertility rate among ethnic Albanian women, especially in rural areas. Prevailing norms prevent many rural ethnic Albanian women from accepting employment outside their homes, although this is less the case for university-educated younger women in Skopje.¹⁷ Most Albanian women's NGOs therefore focus on raising the educational levels of women in the ethnic Albanian community and educating women on health issues. Other women's NGOS and organizations are more directed toward the political empowerment of women from all ethnic groups, such as the Macedonian Women's Lobby which assists women in running for political office.

¹⁶ Guner Nebiu, League of Albanian Women, interview, 3 October 2000.

¹⁷ One informant running a woman's NGO in Gostivar noted that there were many such women's NGO initiatives because it was acceptable for women to volunteer their time but not to obtain employment.

C. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

In the former Yugoslavia, Albanians had no access to state jobs, while Macedonians relied heavily on employment in both the public administration and state-owned enterprises (SOEs). Albanians were forced into narrow economic niches – farming, small scale business, and migration abroad for work. Economic discrimination was significant. For example, before the transition there was one bank in Tetovo, with only 2 Albanians among its 100 employees. No signs or materials were available in Albanian. Banking services were essentially not available to Albanians. The transition to a market economy, which has been slow and painful, has altered this pattern somewhat, but not always in ways viewed as positive. It has clearly heightened economic competition between the two groups, particularly in mixed population area.

Well over one third of the country's citizens consider themselves to be poor or very poor,¹⁸ and while over half the population thinks its quality of life is growing worse, this sentiment is much more marked among ethnic Macedonians. Unemployment is very high and has been for most of the last ten years. Government statistics are not considered reliable but informants generally suggest that unemployment is a problem among both ethnic Albanians and Macedonians.¹⁹ Earlier in the decade, unemployment seems to have been high principally among the Albanians. Now it is high in both communities. Each group likes to suggest that it suffers from more devastating unemployment. Both clearly are affected. Youth unemployment (particularly first-time job entrants) is particularly high, especially in rural areas. There is little being done to address the problem directly. Large numbers of youth with little to occupy their time present a risk factor that encourages political mobilization on ethnic lines.

Many SOEs have closed; others have either cut worker salaries and/or pay them only sporadically. Some of the worst-performing SOEs, employing roughly 25,000-30,000 workers, continue to languish. The problem with SOEs has been compounded by slow progress with some key economic reforms as well as regional trade disruptions, closed markets and a lack of private investment. Both communities have suffered from these economic disruptions while the Macedonian community has been hit hardest by SOE closures. Ethnic Macedonians fear the additional loss of state employment.

While income divisions do not line up with ethnic ones, there appears to be a growing perception among ethnic Macedonians that they do. Economic competition is seen increasingly as something of a zero sum game. One community is viewed as having profited at the expense of the other, and this increases the risk of conflict²⁰ Resentments seem strong particularly in mixed communities in Western Macedonia, where the Albanian population is financing a construction boom from remittances.²¹ As one ethnic Macedonian saw it, in the 1960s –1980s, ethnic Macedonians had stayed at home to build the fatherland while Albanians shirked their responsibilities to work abroad. Now, the Macedonians were penalized their patriotism while the Albanians benefited. Remittances have given the Albanian population a safety net²²; their strong family ties mean that income from one person working abroad will be shared with several

¹⁸ UNDP Human Development Report, 1999.

¹⁹ The mayor of Tetovo noted that of the 7300 families on social welfare in the city, 90% were Albanian. Albanians form 8% of the population of the city so they suffer somewhat disproportionately from unemployment. What is not clear in these statistics is the incidence of hidden employment/remittances.

²⁰ One NGO coordinator thinks that access to employment plays a major role in fueling ethnic tensions in Gostivar.

²¹ Housing conditions are a sore point. Ethnic Macedonians often live in increasingly rundown government-owned apartments, which were a perk of their government job. Now that building conditions have deteriorated, they envy some Albanians their new privately-built structures.

²² As one informant noted, ethnic Albanians had very limited access to state safety nets because they had not held state jobs.

households. The option to travel abroad legally for work has faded, while a lower educational level still makes it harder for Albanians to compete for in-country jobs. However, Albanians have apparently been quicker to spot opportunities and develop businesses as the economy has opened, due to a history of being forced to rely on their own initiative. Trade in building materials and other goods for Kosovo has opened new possibilities, particularly to Albanian businessmen. Albanians also explain with pride that community members will hold down two jobs to support their families – ironically, Macedonians are likely to see this as unfair. They counter that some people have no jobs while others somehow manage to claim several.

Ethnic Macedonians also complain that ethnic Albanians do not pay their share of taxes and are operating largely in the gray economy. Albanians for their part feel that their taxes are transferred to support Macedonian communities and that they see little return. This is also the problem of the heavy tax burden – neither community seems wildly enthusiastic about paying taxes. Changes in the tax structure appear to be in process and these may bring about greater compliance.

Fortunately, the economic situation is now improving. Growth is projected at 6% for the next few years, so job creation should increase. Trade with other regional neighbors (Greece and Bulgaria) and the EU is increasing and foreign investment is growing. Economic reforms are in process. Major donor investments such as an EU-funded east-west highway and a \$50 million IMF-funded anti-poverty program should help mitigate unemployment. A market mentality is beginning to develop. That should lead over time to hiring the best qualified person for the job, whether Albanian or Macedonian, although there will always be a preference for someone from within the group. There is still discrimination. Albanian businesses have little access to bank credit (a political grievance that goes back to at least 1995) and must rely on community or family resources for investment funds. But even this is changing. As one example shows, there are now a number of bank branches in Tetovo employing Albanian staff and trying to reach new customers. The need to reach customers across the ethnic divide should eventually be a powerful factor in breaking down barriers and opening opportunities. Finally, state revenues should rise, along with growth, making it possible for the state to do more to address disparities and grievances.

D. ROLE OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES

1. Civil Service Employment

There are 100,000 employees in the state civil service. There has not been any significant change in the ethnic composition of that bureaucracy. Albanians are employed in numbers well below their percentage of the population. Access does not seem to be substantially more open than it was 3 years ago. The DPA has negotiated modest improvements -- there are a few more Albanian judges, more Albanians in the police and army (including at least one police chief and a few generals), and the like. Unfortunately, the lower educational level of the ethnic Albanian population creates an additional obstacle (beyond prejudice) to access to professional jobs. Even the Pedagogical Faculty at Skopje University does not have an adequate number of Albanian-speaking subject matter specialists. The preparation of Albanian teachers of grades 5 – 8 suffers as a consequence. A second obstacle is that hiring significantly more Albanians when the civil service is facing a major retrenchment would be politically explosive. Many ethnic Macedonians see no alternative to state employment. Some ethnic Albanians argue that at minimum ethnic Albanians could be hired to replace ethnic Macedonians who retire. The DPA does not seem to be pushing this demand very hard at the moment. Incremental progress is likely to continue, more for symbolic reasons than any other, but anything that resembles open competition or even some sort of quota system (as exists for university admissions) is unlikely until some years after the civil service has emerged from the other side of a broad reaching reform.

2. The Education System

The system of education is weak and it does a disservice to all the country's inhabitants. However, the general level of education among the Albanian community is markedly lower than that of the Macedonians. Language and the way the education system is structured are factors here, but the disparity also reflects the fact that Albanians are proportionately more rural than ethnic Macedonians.

Albanian children are more likely to drop out in secondary school and rural females may not even finish the eighth grade, even though schooling is compulsory through the eighth grade.²³ If discovered, parents pay a one-time fine of about \$25 but there appears to be little obligation to re-enroll the child. Such a low demand for education hurts the community by perpetuating educational disparities, weakening the ability of Albanians over the longer term to compete in the new economy, and compromising family well being through low labor market participation for women and higher birth rates.

Albanians have access to own-language education through high school. There is a teacher shortage, due to the years that the Pedagogical Faculty was virtually closed to Albanians. There are now older teachers, a number of whom may soon be coming up for retirement, and some very young teachers, who graduated from the reopened faculty in the last couple of years. Schools are crowded, classes are large, and resources are minimal. This applies to ethnic Macedonian schools as well as mixed ones, although one Macedonian noted that there was a feeling (even among Macedonians) that mixed and Albanian schools received fewer resources than purely Macedonian ones.²⁴

The need for Albanian teachers is expected to grow because of the young age structure of the population. One expert notes an expected shortage (allowing for the expected number of graduates from the Pedagogical Faculty) of 300-600 teachers over the next few years. The Faculty accepts 120 ethnic Albanian entrants per year, compared to 100 ethnic Macedonians. Albanian professors are sometimes disappointed in the qualifications of the pool of applicants as well as the small number of applicants.²⁵ The latter at least partly reflects community disapproval of the Pedagogical Faculty as well as a continuing sense of polarization at the Faculty since the ugly street demonstrations in 1997. Albanians who study or teach there are seen as having sold out. Three surveys of students conducted at the Faculty since 1992 demonstrate that inter-ethnic tensions and distrust have grown. If a Macedonian student tries to sit with an Albanian student, one or the other is likely to be chided by co-ethnic classmates.

Tetovo University has a Pedagogical Faculty. Its graduates cannot obtain jobs as teachers because their degrees are not recognized by the state. It seems probable that Tetovo University Pedagogical Faculty graduates will be needed to meet the growing need for Albanian-speaking teachers. While the quality of the teacher training is uncertain, Article 198 of the new law on higher education would establish a procedure for assessing the knowledge of graduates and granting state degrees to those who pass.

Entrance exams for the state universities are given in the Macedonian language. All university classes except for some at the Pedagogical Faculty are conducted in Macedonian. Albanian children do not receive adequate language instruction in primary and high school (3 hours per week). In recent years, due to an Albanian demand, that instruction is most likely to have been given by an Albanian speaker whose

²³ The team heard that Macedonian rural parents were also inclined to pull their daughters out of school early but not as early as Albanian parents.

²⁴ The mayor of Tetovo noted a desperate need for new schools but indicated that he had no resources to fund them. He explained that some secondary students were studying in a third shift at a number of primary schools because there was simply no room for them in the high schools.

²⁵ They have fewer applicants from which to choose. Only 180 ethnic Albanians apply for those 120 places, while 600 ethnic Macedonians apply for the 100 openings allotted to their community.

own grasp of Macedonian may be inexact. As a consequence, Albanian students do not find it easy to pass the entrance exams. When they do manage to gain admission to the university, they are likely to drop out, due to poor language skills. Currently, Albanian students make up something like 6.5% of university students at Skopje University. This represents progress because in 1991, they formed only 1.7% of university students. The Open Society Institute has recently started to address the problem of inadequate secondary school preparation. It has started “Saturday schools” at seven Albanian gymnasias. Albanian and Macedonian teachers team-teach, concentrating on language skills and subject knowledge. This project is important and should help more students gain university admission. While the proposed new trilingual university (English, Albanian, Macedonian) will enable some Albanian students to study in their mother tongue, those who wish to pursue a discipline not taught at the university will still need to acquire fluency in Macedonian. Some thought should probably be given to improving Macedonian language teaching in the primary and secondary school curriculum, although the Albanian community might meet this with resistance.

USAID plans to invest \$5 million in the new university. The university is a compromise mediated by OSCE’s High Commissioner for National Minorities, Max van der Stoep, with the current coalition government. It will be based near Tetovo and is at least in theory a replacement for Tetovo University. It will have three faculties: pedagogy, business, and public administration. Like most compromises, it does not give either side everything it wanted. For ethnic Albanians, who initially demanded an entirely Albanian institution, they feel that they are giving up a fair amount. They wanted the university to serve as a seat of Albanian culture as well as one of learning. Generally, however, there appears to be some acceptance of the plan, although support is fragile. In a recent survey, roughly two-thirds of ethnic Albanians and somewhat less than half of ethnic Macedonians said that they supported the new university. Given the strong feelings that have prevailed over Tetovo University, this may be about the best that can be expected.²⁶ Several Albanian informants said that the important thing was to have access to high quality education in Albanian. When asked, Macedonians seem to think that as long as the new university is open to all citizens and teaches in the national language as well as other languages, it will be acceptable. A single-minority language institution would not be acceptable. Many ethnic Macedonians see Tetovo University as a hotbed of nationalists so their dislike of the one creates some openness to a more modest “replacement.”²⁷

What will happen to Tetovo University? Its “replacement” is likely to skim off at least some of the cream of students of all ethnic groups. Admission to the other two universities may still remain difficult for Albanian students for the foreseeable future, at least until educational reforms are implemented and the quality of pre-university education improves. Pristina University could eventually open again and could serve as a safety valve for students who cannot obtain a university education in Macedonia or who do not choose to do so. Possibly faculty at Tetovo will gravitate back to Pristina, although much may depend on the final disposition of Kosovo. Sentiment seems to be that the government is likely to ignore Tetovo University. While the Macedonian population strongly resents the University and thinks it is illegal, they are at least accustomed to it, since it has been operating for five years. Tetovo may wither. It also may continue to function, attracting students who do not gain admission elsewhere. It is unlikely, however, that it will attract students who will require a state diploma in order to obtain employment, once those students have other options.

²⁶ The PDP has opposed the new university, but since its political position is currently weak, it poses little threat to the compromise.

²⁷ One ethnic Macedonian informant did voice a fear that eventually, with expanded university instruction for Albanians, there would be more professionals in Macedonia than the economy could absorb.

3. The Census and the Citizenship Law

The government is planning to conduct a census in April 2001. Censuses are not neutral events in divided societies. They are generally hot-button issues because they establish rough parameters for the division of state resources and power. There is hardly a minority in the world that does not claim it is under-counted out of deliberate policy or faulty technical design. Equally, there is hardly a political party in power that would not prefer an approach that over-counts its constituents.

The government last conducted a census in 1991. Albanian dissatisfaction with the process (Macedonian language forms were used) led to a boycott and to claims that they had been substantially undercounted. This in turn led the government to permit the EU to conduct a neutral census in 1994. The results were hardly more satisfactory to the Albanian population since their percentage of the country's population rose by only a percentage point. Their grounds for complaint were, however, undercut by the neutrality of the census implementers. However, they insisted that the restrictive citizenship law (discussed at the end of this section) eliminated ethnic Albanians who should have been counted. Macedonians, for their part, claimed that many of these alleged citizens were actually Kosovars.

It is not clear why the government wants to conduct a census now. The constitution may require a count every ten years, but the 1994 census should have provided an excuse to wait until 2004. Technical preparations are underway, with EU technical support, but no one appears to be paying much attention to the politics of the count. It is difficult to believe that the current coalition would overlook an event that needs very careful management. Perhaps they have adopted a strategy of downplaying its importance and trying to keep the census as a low-key technical process. This seems optimistic.

It would be difficult for the government to fiddle with the Albanian count by too much. Certainly they cannot go below the 1994 census figures, while differential fertility rates suggest that the Albanian proportion of the population should be higher in 2000. It is vital to have transparent procedures for designing and conducting the count and processing the data. At minimum, census forms must be in Albanian and census takers must speak Albanian. Women may also be required as census-takers in Albanian areas, although it could be difficult to identify a sufficient number of these. Albanian statisticians, who may hardly exist, should be involved in the survey process.

The upcoming count may be particularly traumatic for the Macedonian community given that their fertility rate at 1.7 does not reach replacement level, while the Albanian rate is 3.4 children per married woman of reproductive age. In addition, the younger age structure of the Albanian population probably increases the effect. If Albanians are involved in the counting, Macedonians are likely to suspect fraud and over-counting of the Albanian population.

The political consequences of "undercounting" Albanians by a modest margin may not be as dramatic as a jump in the percentage of the Albanian population is likely to be. Ethnic Macedonians understand that Albanians are likely to reach parity with them in the next 10 or so years. There appear to be some anxiety about this, although its removal in time tends to diminish its immediacy. Evidence that numbers are moving in the expected direction will be unsettling. The SDSM could gain a new grievance, at VMRO's expense, particularly if Albanians had been visibly involved in the census process.

Donors should encourage Albanian and Macedonian elites to state their census demands and negotiate a compromise that will allow the conduct of a census that is both honest and technically accurate. The opposition as well as the ruling coalition should be involved in this, so that they cannot use unfavorable results later as a political weapon. Neutral European or American monitoring of the census (data collection AND processing) could be helpful, much as happens in elections here.

One difficult issue linked to the census is the citizenship law. Albanians are very unhappy with this law because persons born of ethnic Macedonian parents can claim citizenship even if they were born and live abroad. Other ethnic groups can only acquire citizenship if they were born on Macedonian territory or have been continuously resident for fifteen years in Macedonia. Many long-time Albanian residents were born elsewhere in Yugoslavia and may not be able to demonstrate fifteen years' residence. Albanians were one of the most mobile populations in the former Yugoslavia so these tough citizenship terms affect them more adversely than any other group (except for perhaps the Roma). Many Albanians did move from Kosovo to Macedonia in the 1990s due to growing Serb oppression. Should these people be considered for citizenship or not? There is some consideration of a reduction in the residence requirement, but this may not be acceptable to the Macedonian public. It will hasten the process of being outnumbered in their "own" country.

Even when an Albanian meets the citizenship requirements, it apparently can be difficult to obtain the papers. The DG assessment team talked to one Albanian worker in Skopje who had been born in the city but was unable to obtain citizenship papers. He had been a guest worker in Germany for seven years and so did not meet the residence requirement. The mayor of Tetovo indicated it had cost him \$500 to obtain citizenship documents for his daughter, who was born in Tetovo but had been studying in Germany since 1992. He also quoted the case of a distant relative, who was born in Kosovo but satisfied the residence requirement and also had to pay \$500 for papers. This is a rather steep sum, but the mayor indicated that he thought the cost had recently fallen to \$50 – still too expensive for the Skopje worker. The Albanians claim that there are 100,000 Albanians who should be counted as citizens (this seems to include at least some arrivals from Kosovo in more recent years). The Ministry of the Interior counters that there are only 11,000 individuals in the country who are stateless. Since the citizenship law affects rights (who votes, who can visit a health clinic) and the distribution of power, it is no small matter.

4. The Justice System/Human Rights

The justice system is in substantial need of reform. Albanians do not trust the system but it seems likely that many Macedonians do not as well. Albanians do not feel that they get a fair hearing (at least not in disputes that involve the state or Macedonians), and they complain (as does everyone) that cases take forever to resolve. Court proceedings are in Macedonian, but translation is offered for non-Macedonian defendants and witnesses. While the team visited the minority rights committee in the Ministry of Justice, it did not know of any cases registered by minorities charging discrimination. The team did not hear of any Albanian cases from other sources, but did learn that a substantial number of Roma cases have been filed. In some multiethnic countries, the courts have been very active and sometimes even courageous in defending minority rights. That does not seem to be the case in Macedonia.

The problems with the justice system appear to be systemic and widespread so that addressing specific minority charges of discrimination would probably be difficult in the absence of broader institutional reform.

There are four or five human rights organizations in the country, the most active of which is the Helsinki Committee.²⁸ Marjana Najcevska, a member of the Board of the Helsinki Committee, noted that the Committee does not receive human rights complaints from ethnic Albanians. She thinks that while this is partly explained by their lower level of knowledge about rights, it also reflects a strategy of seeking political party redress of grievances. If the latter is true, it weakens democratic institutional channels for the resolution of problems over time and augments party control.

²⁸ Two other groups were a small human rights organization in Prilip and another for Albanians in Gostivar.

5. Local Government

Little real progress has been made in this area. Macedonia remains a very centralized state. It is of course a small country so while the effects of centralization may still be negative, the repercussions should not be what they are in a much larger country. In theory, of course, there is a degree of local self-government, with elected mayors and councils, but in practice fiscal decentralization has lagged behind the delegation of authority. Without control over some share of own-source revenues plus some sort of transparent equalization policy between municipalities, local government officials have little discretion in what they choose to do. A fiscal decentralization law has been prepared and at least one expert, Dr. Jordana Siljanovska, believes that it will move forward.

Once again, this is a highly politicized issue. Albanians want local self-governance. One reason they often do not pay taxes²⁹ is that they do not feel they benefit from the revenues collected. The mayor of Tetovo noted that last year the Ministry of Finance returned only about 65% of the tax revenue collected in the area. For their part, Macedonians fear that substantial decentralization could lead to Albanian secession, or at least they think it substantially increases the risks that this will turn out to be the case. If historical evidence since 1960 can be trusted, they are wrong. There does not appear to be a single case of decentralization in a multi-ethnic environment leading to independence. By and large, decentralization appears to satisfy minority demands for self-governance. Waiting too long to offer it can, by contrast, have negative consequences for stability (viz., Sri Lanka and East Timor in Indonesia).

The 1995 law on municipalities recognized the right to use in public administration both a minority language and Macedonian when the population in a given municipality is over 50% minority. Road signs can also be shown in both languages. Albanian is now used in local administration where relevant. This is a great help to local citizens who need to conduct business with the local administration but who do not speak adequate Macedonian.

There has been concern among local government specialists that the number of municipalities was increased in 1998 from 34 to 124. Some of the resulting municipalities are tiny, with perhaps as few as 1600 persons living in them. Others, particularly the urban ones, are much larger, with populations of several thousands. It appears that the boundaries were created to line up with ethnic divisions, so that a small Macedonian enclave in the middle of a much larger Albanian population might end up as a new municipality, in order to give its people some sense of control over their own destiny. Of course, political explanations also underpin the choice of 124 units. Intense bargaining between political parties, each of which tried to set municipal boundaries in a way that would favor their party.

An argument could be made that in a small country with an accommodating central political elite, tensions may be better managed by maintaining a centralized system. There is a risk with decentralization that mid-level political elites operating in the municipalities would have less at stake in being moderate and could use ethnic rhetoric to mobilize support. However, many of the new municipalities are so small that they are likely to remain heavily dependent on the central government, no matter how much fiscal decentralization is achieved. In addition, parties are very centralized and have tight control over their members, so the risk of this happening is probably fairly minimal. Local leaders draw their power more from their party than from their constituents.

The arguments in favor of strengthening local self-governance are as follows:

- it meets a key Albanian demand;

²⁹ They also do not pay taxes because the tax rate is so high and the collection mechanisms are so poor.

- it potentially relieves tensions in mixed areas by separating ethnic communities a bit since the new municipalities tend to fit with the ethnic map;
- it creates alternate centers of power and might over time allow the rise of new local leaders (accountability to the local population may be easier to establish than it seems to be with MPs) which could have the happy effect of increasing pluralism in Albanian areas (some of which are now at risk of increasing DPA domination);
- municipalities might eventually ally across ethnic lines on common issues, such as small municipalities against large or rich versus poor; and
- it reduces the amount of resources at stake at the center and so may help moderate the zero-sum nature of competition for power at the center.

While USAID is understandably very discouraged with progress on decentralization, there could be value from an ethnic standpoint in continuing to work in this sector, if the fiscal decentralization law is passed in the relatively near future.

6. The Electoral System

Macedonia's electoral system combines proportional representation with single member districts. It is a system that grants minorities representation, even though ethnic Albanian political leaders believe that they are disadvantaged when it comes to turning votes into seats. Thirty-five seats are filled through a proportional closed party list system while the remaining eighty-five seats are filled through majority vote (over 50%) in single member districts. The president is directly elected. At the local level, mayors are directly elected and municipal councils are elected through PR in a closed list system.

The system is inclusive. This is important not only in divided societies but also during times of transition when there is so much uncertainty and even paranoia over outcomes. The electoral system has given ethnic Albanians real power. Albanians cannot only represent their demands but can obtain some satisfaction of them. The disadvantage of this system is that it increases the political importance of ethnic issues. An electoral system that forced political parties to appeal across ethnic boundaries might have weakened ethnic divisions over time, but such systems can be very complex (creating distrust in countries where education levels are not especially high) and can sometimes shut minorities out of any real influence.

Electoral fraud is a growing concern in both Macedonian and Albanian communities. Sporadic election day violence in Albanian communities during the September 2000 local elections shocked ethnic Albanians and reinforced ethnic Macedonian stereotypes concerning Albanian criminality. If opposition leaders come to think that a transfer of power is not possible, then the incentive to engage in ethnic outbidding rises.

E. LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL MOBILIZATION

While over fifty political parties have been formed since independence, the only ones that have flourished are ethnic parties, or those that show an interest in protecting the rights of "their" people.³⁰ This makes it difficult or impossible to organize around cross-ethnic interests such as class or ideology. The Albanian and Macedonian rural poor may have interests in common, but their political party affiliations and structure makes it impossible for them to present a united front on agriculture policy. This suggests that most important political issues are ethnic issues or can quickly acquire an ethnic cast.³¹ This is

³⁰ One attempt to found an Albanian party (the Liberal Union of Albanians) that would focus on broader socio-economic issues foundered because it could not compete with the minority rights agendas of its competitors.

³¹ An argument could be made of course that no policy is completely neutral in its distributive impacts.

particularly true of the Albanian parties, which concentrate on minority rights issues to the exclusion of other bread-and-butter concerns.³² Applying an ethnic lens to every conceivable topic tends to homogenize each group and can lead too great a focus on too many minor conflicts.³³ One example of the latter is the unresolved parliamentary debate over the use of bilingual seals by local government to represent their districts.

Each community is represented by more than one political party. In combination with the electoral system, the party system results in a need for coalitions across parties in order to claim a majority. An Albanian political party has been included in the governing coalition, first the PDP in the SDSM-dominated government from 1992-8 and then the DPA, in the VMRO-DPMNA and DA coalition government. While there have sometimes been periods in which inter-ethnic tensions were high, particularly under the former government headed by Gligorov, it seems possible to conclude that since 1992 reasonably pragmatic accommodationists have been in power as opposed to extremist hard-liners. Albanians have won a number of concessions from the current coalition government, the release of 800 political prisoners (including the two mayors), more media time, the decision to establish the new university, and the placement of additional numbers of Albanians at high levels of the state administration among them (there are currently 10 ethnic Albanian ministers and deputy ministers), and a style of coalition politics that symbolizes inclusion. The absence of incidents of government repression is also notable. However, all parties are inclined to use radical ethnic rhetoric to gain advantage, particularly during elections.³⁴ This is particularly true of those out of power or struggling to preserve power. The SDSM government, for example, stooped to ugly language during the 1998 parliamentary election campaign, referring to the entire Albanian minority as terrorists and separatists.³⁵ On the Albanian side, opposition politicians claim that the Albanian party in power has sold out the community and produced few gains; while those in government proudly present the list of concessions obtained. For ethnic Macedonians, the charges are similar but from an opposite tact. SDSM claims that VMRO has made dangerous concessions and plans to make still more.

For the past few years, the most intense political conflicts have appeared to be within ethnic groups conflicts rather than between groups ones. This was not the case earlier. The 1997 Gostivar flag-raising incident, the bombings in 1997, the violent police intervention on Tetovo University campus in 1995 and the nasty street demonstrations in reaction to the initiation of the use of Albanian at the Pedagogical Faculty in 1995 (sparked in this instance by VMRO) speak to heightened levels of between-group conflict prior to 1998. These incidents may have occurred because the SDSM government felt forced to demonstrate its purity and toughness on ethnic issues, due to the nationalist rhetoric of its two opponents, VMRO-DPMNA and the DPA. In the campaign that preceded the 1998 parliamentary elections, VMRO moved to the political center, downplayed its nationalist rhetoric and criticized the government mainly on economic performance issues. Largely because of poor SDSM economic performance, VMRO won more seats. The new VMRO-DPMNA coalition found itself only 2 seats short of a majority. It could have accepted the two Socialist deputies into its coalition but its desire to be identified as pro-economic reform mitigated against this choice. Instead, in a surprise move, it approached the radical Albanian DPA (the PDP was tainted on economic reform issues due to its collaboration with the SDSM), whose members then joined the coalition.

³² The PDP's 3 major issues appear to be language rights, higher education, and employment rights for Albanians.

³³ Mirjana Najcevska and Violeta Petrovska-Beska, "Between Political Solutions and Reality: Inter-ethnic relations in the Republic of Macedonia," *Helsinki Monitor* 3 (1999): 10.

³⁴ Ethnic slurs were apparently in common use during the recent local elections.

³⁵ By contrast, the SDSM is credited with acting with some restraint during the Kosovo crisis.

Once in power, both parties turned moderate. Parties are centralized and leaders can control supporters. Relations between party leaders seem close, allowing compromise on key Albanian demands. The DPA for its part has moderated earlier demands and advances Albanian interests slowly, realizing that too many demands voiced too loudly could weaken its coalition partner. Both the SDSM and the PDP, now in opposition, have adopted more radical tones on ethnic issues but they may have less credibility when they make such claims than did VMRO and the DPA.

While it seems possible for Macedonian parties to win a parliamentary majority and form a coalition without the participation of an Albanian party, this seems less likely to be the case when it comes to electing a president. The 1999 presidential election demonstrated the usefulness of Albanian support, in this instance organized by the DPA. This puts the Albanian population in the perhaps dangerous position of being seen as “king-maker” by the Macedonians – of having political influence out of all proportion to their percentage of the population. It also reinforces ethnic Macedonian stereotypes about Albanians as sheep that can be easily corralled by their party “shepherds.”

Virtually every informant interviewed, Macedonian and foreign, raised the problem of increasingly high levels of unregulated party competition and political mobilization as a concern, sometimes even without a prompting question and often in the form of an emotional diatribe. Growing political party wealth, signs of corruption, pressure on the media, and electoral fraud make political contests more of a zero-sum game and tilt the playing field in unacceptable ways. Macedonian intellectuals see this process as very dangerous for both democratization and, over the longer term, for inter-ethnic harmony. Local analysts refer to this as the “particization” of society.

VMRO’s control of its Macedonian constituents is less extensive than is the DPA’s of ethnic Albanian areas. The PDP fell apart during the recent local elections and withdrew from the second round, charging fraud. Fraud seemed abundant on all sides but, even without fraud, the PDP was not going to do well due to the combination of voter perceptions that the DPA had delivered the “goods” and increasing DPA control in municipalities. Greater pluralism in DPA areas would be useful if only to preclude the Albanians from continuing to occupy a sort of king-maker role in politics. Such pluralism also might encourage greater attention to other, non-ethnic issues.

Predictions for the 2002 elections are uncertain. Macedonian voters are not happy with the current government but this probably has more to do with economic issues than with ethnic ones. Albanian voters, by contrast, are satisfied with the current coalition, although concerned by the DPA’s growing harshness. The coalition is pushing through economic reforms at a rapid pace, hoping that they will have an impact in two years when the next parliamentary election is held. Creating jobs and improving living standards may help VMRO win back some support. If the SDSM wins and the PDP has collapsed, it is not certain what will happen. The SDSM may find it difficult to stomach the DPA as a partner. It is likely to want some kind of Albanian political “cover” because if the Albanians feel left out, their demands will escalate.

The media, divided along ethnic lines in part due to language divisions, play a role in emphasizing, solidifying and sometimes exacerbating ethnic divisions and stereotypes. Programs are available in all minority languages. The public national broadcast and print media are influenced by the government coalition. As such, they are not highly regarded. They do, however, tend to be moderate or silent on ethnic issues at this juncture. In addition, there are a very large number of private electronic and print media.³⁶ Almost all of the private media claim that they are independent. There are few, such as A-1 TV,

³⁶ 80 radio and 57 television broadcasting concessions were granted in Macedonia, of which 14 Albanian language radio and 13 television stations, 5 radio and TV stations on Turkish, 2 radios and TV stations on Romani and 1 radio and TV station on Serbian. *Media Bulletin* 2/1998 p.12.

which are genuinely independent but there appear to be few if any independent Albanian mass media entities. Albanians will sometimes read **Dnevnik**, a Macedonian-language paper, because it is more independent than **Fakti** or **Flaka** (the two main Albanian-language papers), both of which are seen as DPA organs. In reality, most private media are affiliated to a political party or receive some degree of funding from a party. While this may not entirely compromise their independence, it certainly imposes limits on what they can broadcast or write. The overabundance of media makes them too dependent on non-advertising sources of income.³⁷ These media tend to be less moderate often than the public media. Only the PDP seems shut out from access at the moment. Some media, such as SITEL, the SDSM-affiliated TV station, can be very inflammatory on ethnic issues.

Finally, the team also examined the role religious leaders play in fomenting or calming conflict. The answer seems to be that they do neither, at least with respect to Albanian-Macedonian issues. The Orthodox clergy are apparently very concerned about small Christian groups operating in the country and have claimed that the small number of Jehovah's Witnesses and Evangelicals are dangerous. They claim that ethnic Macedonians are Orthodox and that one cannot be ethnic Macedonian without being Orthodox. There appears to be serious discrimination against the Jehovah's Witnesses in general. Clergy could potentially serve as a force for moderation and justice, although it could take some considerable amount of work to get them there. David Steele, who is with the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C., has been working on a USIP-funded project to bring together religious leaders in Bosnia. He plans to come to Macedonia in the very near future to begin similar ecumenical activities here. He notes that in some places in the region, the Protestant church, although very small, is able to act as a bridge between Muslim and Orthodox clergy. Given the Orthodox clergy's obvious fear of losing some of their sheep to these newer Christian sects, this "bridging" concept may not work in Macedonia.

F. ROLE OF EXTERNAL FORCES

Events in Albania, but more so in Kosovo, influence interethnic relations in Macedonia to a great extent. This is largely because of the many familial connections ethnic Albanians in Macedonia have with Kosovars, their identity with Kosovo as an "ancestral home," and the fact that Macedonia and Kosovo were part of the same state until Yugoslavia's breakup in 1991. While it is unclear at this point what the final status will be for Kosovo, particularly given the recent ouster of Milosevic in the FRY and the election of a new president, Kosovar Albanian leaders, representing the entire political spectrum, want nothing short of independence.

Kosovo's independence was a crucial rallying point in the province's recent municipal elections. Held on October 28, and announced as free and fair by the OSCE's election monitor mission, the elections yielded an overwhelming victory for Ibrahim Rugova's moderate Democratic League of Kosova (LSK), which won 58% of the vote, taking control of 21 of the 27 contested municipalities. The elections left Hashim Thaci, the former political leader of the Kosovo Liberation Army, who represents the more radical Democratic Party of Kosovo with only 27% of the vote, followed by Ramush Haradinaj's Alliance for the Future of Kosova with a mere 8%. In an interview following the elections, Rugova, who has always supported independence, stressed that the election results were a clear call for independence. Although Rugova has urged the United States and its Western European allies to "recognize the independence of Kosova," and to proceed toward the recognition of an independent Kosovo now while KFOR and the United Nations administration remain in the province, the international community is resisting this. On October 30, the State Department issued a statement that demands for independence could not be fulfilled

³⁷ Professor Dona Kolar at the Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research noted that it was possible to run a small ad for seven days for about the price of a cup of coffee.

at this time because of UN Resolution 1244 which stipulates that Kosovo's final status can only be determined after the development of democratic institutions, and the holding of general elections.

The settlement of Kosovo's political fate will inevitably have an impact on Macedonia. Opinions differ as to whether a future independent Kosovo would have a more stabilizing or destabilizing effect on Macedonia and interethnic relations. On the pessimistic side is the perspective that an independent Kosovo might lead to the creation of a "Greater Albania" by inspiring separatist ethnic Albanian sentiments pushing for secession of the western part of Macedonia. A more optimistic viewpoint is that an independent Kosovo would have a stabilizing impact on Macedonia by facilitating trade and other commercial activities and also allowing ethnic Albanians in Macedonia to reside and study in Kosovo. Given that there is a considerable level of ethnic political power-sharing and accommodation in Macedonia and ethnic Albanians are feeling more and more part of their state, it may be unlikely at least for now that the first scenario will prove attractive for Macedonia's Albanian political elite and electorate.

Important for Macedonia is the continued involvement and commitment on the part of the international community to the political and economic stability of Macedonia.³⁸ There is an established pattern of international preventive action in the country since 1991, and Macedonia stands out as one of the relatively successful applications of preventive diplomacy. Some of the actors providing preventive measures were third parties such as the United Nations and its Preventive Deployment force, the OSCE and its High Commissioner for National Minorities as well as the Working Group of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia. Long-term preventive measures that center on memberships in international and regional organizations and that entail Macedonia's adherence to minority and human rights are crucial mitigating influences. The recent and previous governments have all been committed to drawing Macedonia closer into the European fold and Macedonia is also keen on being included in regional arrangements, such as the Balkan Stability Pact, so as not to be left in a political, economic, and military-security vacuum in a still volatile region. The eventual admission of Macedonia into NATO, and perhaps even the European Union will further contribute toward Macedonia remaining committed to the observation of minority rights and interethnic co-existence, although some observers agree that Macedonia has missed opportunities to move faster toward NATO and EU membership.

Diasporas have the potential to fuel conflict by financing the political and military mobilization of their kin. They can adopt extreme positions because they do not personally run any risks. The risk from the Macedonia diaspora, which is small and split into two groups, one of which is hostile to the Macedonian state, is not great. The same cannot be said about the Albanian diaspora. This diaspora is large, strong and militant. It includes a considerable number of intellectuals. The diaspora organizational structure is not only well-centralized among various countries but it holds considerable assets, largely because of monthly fund contributions by Albanians throughout the world but also because of their links to organized crime. Unfortunately, the team was not able to obtain any information concerning diaspora financing of ethnic Albanian political organizations in Macedonia. Kosovo may take up Diaspora attention at present.

G. SUMMARY OF PRINCIPAL FACTORS DRIVING TENSIONS

The team believes that as Macedonia's integration with Europe proceeds and as the economy recovers, political elites are most likely to maintain their moderate stance and inter-group relations will at least hold steady and may slowly improve. We believe that the risk of violence between ethnic groups is at this

³⁸ Beska and Nagcevska make the interesting argument that this intervention has sometimes interfered with the development of domestic channels and mechanisms for mediating conflict, *op cit.*, 10-11.

point only moderate.³⁹ The Kosovo crisis demonstrated the willingness and the skill of political leaders in managing a very tense situation. However, we find the following factors to be of considerable concern:

- The increasing high levels of political mobilization, political party domination and unregulated party competition.

While use of ethnic outbidding to gain political advantage is kept within certain limits for the time being, we believe that this factor exacerbates tensions. With elections three years out of every four, the pot is kept simmering. The DG assessment team has produced a more thorough analysis of political party behavior than possible in this paper. We note only that many informants expressed concern about growing politicization of society, even in schools. It seems important to try to counter this degree of mobilization and politicization, which can easily revolve around ethnic demands and grievances.

If election fraud, which seemed fairly widespread during the recent local elections, grows, it may force more desperate opposition parties into increased use of the ethnic card. If the opposition cannot be certain that there is a chance for alternation in power, there seems little reason why they should play by the democratic rules. Increasing pluralism (in terms of issues, agendas and political choices) on the Albanian side seems also important, in light of the strengthening DPA hold. This is not simply so that Albanians have more choices but because some degree of division may be important to preclude the community from being identified consistently as the “king-maker” in elections, as they were in the last presidential elections.

- The increasing sense of ethnic Macedonian vulnerability and pessimism about the future, which may be particularly prevalent in some mixed population areas.

There are many factors responsible for the sense of Macedonian vulnerability, explained in the sections above: concessions on key Albanian demands, economic decline which has hit them very hard and undermined their sense of superiority, regional instability and hostility from neighbors, the sense that the West favors Albanians, government corruption and the growing concern that Macedonian political processes are not functioning as they should. The Macedonians see themselves as a small, unique population afloat in a sea full of sharks (Bulgarians, Greeks, Serbs and Albanians). They explain that the Albanians can turn to Kosovo and Albania while they have only this small state. This sense of vulnerability could mean that ethnic Macedonians would be less willing to compromise on future Albanian needs and demands, potentially pushing the Albanians in a more radical direction and making both groups more susceptible to mobilization around ethnic issues.

- High levels of youth unemployment among both Albanians and Macedonians

Youth who have no skills and perceive no future have little stake in society. As with skinheads throughout Europe, they are easy to organize around ugly ideologies. Economic growth will address this risk with time, but these youth appear to receive little attention now and they may lack skills for a market economy. New investments in infrastructure and the IMF’s anti-poverty program could help, but there may be an argument for additional palliative efforts. Such efforts, however, could have too small an impact relative to the size of the problem to justify an investment.

- The ultimate disposition of Kosovo

³⁹ Ted Gurr, in his on-going minorities at risk project has tracked 275 ethnic groups and does not find Macedonia to be at high risk of ethnic violence. See Peoples versus States: Minorities at Risk in the New Century, 2000.

It is possible that an independent democratic Kosovo with open borders to Macedonia could help stabilize Macedonia. It would provide an additional outlet for educational, employment and cultural opportunities for Albanians. On the other hand, a Kosovo that remains a province of a still-not-very democratic but post-Milosevic Serbia could perhaps be destabilizing. The “homogenization” of Kosovars and Macedonian Albanians worries ethnic Macedonians.

- Census and Citizenship

Progress in reexamining the fairness of the Citizenship Law is required. The current law seems too restrictive in granting minorities citizenship. In addition, some serious study of the number of minorities who have rights to citizenship under the current law but are unable to obtain papers should be conducted and a solution developed to address the problem. It is possible that a special (and perhaps roving) ombudsman for citizenship could be established for a brief period of time to assist people having problems in obtaining papers or who cannot afford the fee. It is possible that were USAID to decide to embark upon a judicial reform program, a small component addressing citizenship problems could be included.

The census is likely to provoke ethnic tensions next year, even with deft handling by the coalition government. If the data collection itself does not become controversial, then the results will most certainly be. Vis-à-vis the conduct of the census, the EU is providing technical support. The issue is more a political than a technical one and therefore seems more a matter for Embassy attention than USAID.

- Language

Ethnic Albanians still wish to create a genuinely bilingual society. Macedonians are adamantly opposed to learning Albanian and are fearful that the creation of a range of Albanian-language institutions will create the kind of parallel society that emerged in Kosovo during the 1990s. Some compromises have been made vis-à-vis the Pedagogical Faculty, the new university, and the use of Albanian in local administration wherever ethnic Albanians are in a majority. Additional progress may be hotly contested. There was discussion in parliament in May 1999 concerning the use of Albanian in parliamentary discussions, with translation provided, but no headway was made. Communication and inter-group interaction will remain limited as long as one group cannot speak the language of the other.

III. STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

Probably the most important strategy for preventing conflict is continued European and US monitoring and dialogue with Macedonian political elites. These are diplomatic interventions and not development assistance ones. We think donor intervention may be particularly required to make further progress on language issues, decentralization reform and the citizenship issues. Nonetheless, there may be a role for development assistance in supporting the agreements that grow out of such negotiations. USAID showed flexibility in its willingness to provide funding for the new university, and we think such openness should be preserved.

There are already a large number of donor-funded and indigenous programs that have as their direct objective (as opposed to the by-product) the improvement of interethnic relations. Many of these are psycho-social in orientation, aiming to diminish prejudice over time by increasing contact and knowledge. Annex B presents a summary of on-going efforts as well as some lessons learned. We have tried to draw on those lessons learned in making programming recommendations.

The team believes that much of USAID's current program *indirectly* contributes to building systems that will ensure peaceful coexistence in Macedonia. The strengthening of democratic institutions that can peacefully channel conflicts of interest is key. Assisting in building the foundations of a free market economy is also critical. This will strengthen growth and opportunity. An expanding economic "pie" is likely to diminish concerns over the size of the slice given to any one party because it then seems that there will be enough for everyone. However, at least in the short term, continued economic reform (and civil service reform, if it takes place) may have a differential effect on the ethnic Albanian and Macedonian communities, benefiting one and harming the other. In this instance, it may be important for the USAID mission to screen its new strategy for possible differential impacts and to think through whether palliative measures might be needed to mitigate the harm done to Macedonians dependant on state employment.

USAID/Macedonia also supports programs that either could or do *directly* address ethnic issues, including:

- ISC/Demnet (which has the potential to work with groups that wish to conduct multiethnic activities but is not doing so currently);
- CRS (civic education and parent councils in mixed schools);
- The two-month old Community Self-Help Initiative (CSHI) (which directs some resources bringing together residents in multiethnic communities around small scale projects);
- Search for Common Ground (multiethnic media; children's program "Our Neighborhood");
- The Local Government Reform Project; and
- Funding for the new university.

The latter two respond to key ethnic Albanian demands and represent an opportunity to diminish grievances. Decentralization can help preserve greater degrees of pluralist political competition (especially within group competition), allowing new leaders to compete and checking central government power. Also, to the extent that empowered local governments deliver much needed goods and services, they can reduce some of the daily hardships that can so easily convert into scapegoating. The team sees both projects as important. We also believe that the multimedia work undertaken by Search and other entities (the Open Society) is very important and could usefully be expanded. We remain ambivalent about children's programs, not because one can't affect their thinking, but because they remain under the control of parents and teachers, both of whom may undermine messages given through different channels.⁴⁰ Curriculum reform and changing the thinking of teachers are both important tools but they are long term objectives. If one is concerned about conflict in the shorter-term, children are not the answer. With respect to CSHI, we believe the project is most likely to select sites where relations are already adequate, based on their own criteria of needing a "community" with which they can work. Certainly, CRS found that its parent councils worked best in areas where relations were not so tense. This approach begs the question of what gain is then expected. At minimum, it could make sense to choose projects that will reduce potentially damaging competition over limited resources. Finally, with respect to DemNet, the ISC in this new third phase has not accepted any multi-ethnic proposals among its thirteen community action plans (CAPs) and local environmental action plans (LEAPs). While it received perhaps a dozen such proposals in the recent competition, none were strong. It has changed its approach in this new phase to one of more neutral competition, so while it received perhaps a dozen multiethnic proposals, none were strong enough to make the cut. The Demnet program focuses more broadly on civil society development, making interethnic cooperation only one of its priorities. The mission may want to work with ISC to revamp its criteria so that it can accept at least a few of the weaker multiethnic

⁴⁰ Note that a recent evaluation of the university's Ethnic Conflict Resolution Project's conflict resolution games fourth graders still did find some impact a few years later, when the participants were in the seventh grade. This is encouraging but still a reasonably short time frame.

proposals. As one informant noted, NGOs often do not have a good model of inter-ethnic cooperation and do not know how to structure such efforts. They require assistance to develop good proposals.

The question then remains of whether the mission should develop additional programs to improve ethnic relations. USAID is already making a substantial contribution but we believe that some additional efforts may be merited and could fit within an DG or EG S.O. There are three types of strategies from which USAID could choose, depending on how it weighs some of the factors which drive tensions: manipulation of ethnicity by political elites resulting from fragile democratic institutions that cannot hold leaders accountable or adequately channel demand; disparities and grievances; and limited interaction between ethnic groups. The team believes the first factor is the most important. However, we recognize that the more extreme the disparities and grievances, the more likely a given population is to respond to ethnic appeals made by leaders. We believe that there is less merit in funding additional interpersonal interaction, except perhaps among youth and high school students, for reasons given below. A fourth kind of strategy would be to support an increase in knowledge about the dynamics of ethnic relations in Macedonia in order to select better programs.

The options outlined below present programming possibilities that the team sees as priorities. We would rate those in the first category as the highest priority⁴¹:

Reducing manipulation of ethnicity by elites/strengthening the accountability of leaders and democratic institutions:

- **Media:** 1) The creation of a media monitoring project. This could be a one-time or periodic research project or a continuous service. It would follow majority and minority language media for unflattering and/or inflammatory coverage of other ethnic groups. Monitoring during and after election campaigns would be particularly important. It would publish reports and hold occasional seminars and news-briefings of its own to call journalists and media owners to account. The resources exist locally to do this sort of monitoring.⁴² 2) Private Albanian mass media news seems mostly to consist of rebroadcasts from Tirana and Kosovo radio and TV. There is very little independent news programming. This means that Macedonia's Albanian population is living daily with the problems of Kosovo and Albania. While interest in these regions is high, audiences may be learning too little about events in their own country. As one informant noted, ethnic Albanians learned very little about the events surrounding the local elections in Macedonian parts of the country. Some support for Albanian-language news broadcasts (which could be shared among stations) could be useful. It could contribute to a focus on broader issues, such as economic reform, environment degradation and health services, in contrast to a narrow focus on minority rights. 3) Due in part to language differences, there seem to be no media that serve a genuinely integrative function across ethnic groups. There is hardly any way to carry on a genuine national debate or to subject events, conditions and political ideas, especially those linked to ethnicity, to intense scrutiny. This is partly an issue of investigative

⁴¹ In sorting through program priorities, we found adequate program coverage for some ideas of interest to the team. For example, Search for Common Ground and the Gligorev Foundation are both beginning to work with the ethnic Macedonian diaspora. Search hopes eventually to develop relations between the Albanian and Macedonian diasporas. In addition, Search is currently training a cadre of conflict mediators, who can help disputants in any conflict reach peaceful accommodation. Such mediators could be very useful in mixed schools (where some of them already work on Search civic education programs) and in mixed communities.

⁴² As one example, the Polish Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights Press Center published a weekly bulletin on human rights and freedom of speech. It draws attention to inflammatory and erroneous media coverage of ethnic issues and to the stigmatization of minorities.

skills but more one of the lack of media entities that are genuinely independent and see themselves as serving all communities. Multiethnic journalism projects that publish or broadcast pieces/programs in all languages are a good start but more could be done. More journalists should be involved in more frequent joint efforts. These projects have helped to strengthen the professionalism and skills of journalists at the same time that they produce news of interest to all citizens. The emphasis in any media projects should be on broadcast media and TV in particular due to the much larger audience.

- Working with local government leaders and administrators on conflict resolution/mediation and on encouraging inter-ethnic partnerships to address problems. If real decentralization makes some headway, this sort of activity could be folded into USAID's local government project, if there are sites in mixed municipalities. The Gligorov Foundation is starting something similar. It will bring together local officials for seminars that address the kinds of conflicts that tend to have or acquire an ethnic cast. For example, they plan to present case studies and conduct simulations and role playing around typical kinds of problems. The one example share was a case study of what to do if a Macedonian couple did not want to get married in their Albanian majority town because the civil ceremony was likely to be conducted in Albanian.
- The DG assessment team recommended a broader civil society program, in part to help check growing politicization and political party domination. We concur with this recommendation. Civil society groups exploring interests that appeal across ethnic lines, such as women's political participation, can put pressure on politicians to pursue non-ethnic themes. One possibility would be to investigate the possibility of creating one or more genuinely multi-ethnic NGOs, either issue-based, municipality-based or both.⁴³ The idea here would be to have an NGO with multi-ethnic board and staff. One possibility would be to provide support for the Women's Lobby. There is evidence that women's groups can and do work across ethnic lines. The movement is full of talented women – women who would like to be politicians but who are for the moment shut out of this arena as well as women whose cultural background does not enable them to work but does permit them to volunteer.

Another would be for regional groups that could help local NGOs develop their ideas for multi-ethnic activities (which could be defined as either two NGOs of different groups working together on a joint project or one NGO serving more than one community) and then would give grants for those projects. It might even be possible to attach one of the new Search for Common Ground mediators to such an NGO, since Search needs to find an institutional mechanism for those trained mediators who will not be attached to schools. Towns which might be appropriate for such a program include Tetovo, Stip and Kocani (where the Roma population has difficulties), Struga, Kicevo, Debar and Resen.

Creating genuinely multiethnic NGOs will not be easy but as noted there is some limited progress in this direction. It may require a neutral arbiter, such as foreign advisers. It is possible that this is something older, more experienced Peace Corps volunteers could take on, as long as there were adequate assistance and supervision from either the Skopje Peace Corps office or a small USAID-funded contractor or grantee staff. One possibility would be to start with a pilot in a city where relations do not seem terribly strained. If the pilot seems to be working, the program could be

⁴³ The closest model to this is the Inter-Ethnic Project Gostivar (IPG) NGO. IPG is a Dutch-supported and advised multi-ethnic NGO that awards grants for multiethnic community projects and also plans to take on larger programs on its own. IPG has a multiethnic board representing all communities in the city. Its staff, however, seem to be entirely Albanian. As such, it does not entirely work as a good multi-ethnic model.

expanded. The objectives could include developing organization-to-organization (as opposed to individual level) networks of communication and relationship across the ethnic divide, providing a community mediation service to settle disputes while still minor, and solving community problems that may exacerbate tensions (the focus should perhaps be on these kinds of problems rather than any and all problems). It is at least conceivable that they could demand higher levels of accountability from local politicians and MPs, and that new leaders could arise out of a strengthened civil society base.

- The DG assessment team has also recommended support for political party development. We believe that assisting parties to develop organizational structures could be useful. It might over time balance the unchecked power that current political leaders have. Greater organizational depth could mean greater attention to an array of ideas and interests. There is a risk that more diffused power within parties could make the management of ethnic tensions more difficult because top leaders have less flexibility to cut deals and to ensure that their members abide by those deals. Assisting parties over time to develop platforms and issues is also important to the extent that it can serve as a counterweight to a steady diet of minority rights and ethnic outbidding.⁴⁴

Increasing Knowledge of Ethnic Relations:

- Another possibility is to fund a Small Grants Program for indigenous research on inter-ethnic issues and peace building. The program would be designed to increase knowledge and spread awareness. Such studies could contribute substantially to program development. Mechanisms for dissemination would be funded as well as the actual research. Such a low-cost program could perhaps be appended to an existing USAID project, via an amendment. One topic could be to explore why ethnic relations are better in some communities (although this may be related to the proportions of the “majority” and “minority” populations).

Addressing Disparities and Grievances:

Disparities and differential treatment reinforce group identity, and this is one reason they need to be addressed. However, gains for one community may represent losses for another. The benefit-loss calculation may be complex and needs to be thought through for interventions that attempt to address grievances. Compensation may be required for those who are actual or imaginary losers. As noted earlier, considering the inclusion of some palliatives to address more directly economic grievances that grow out of the reform process may have some merit, if the mission has adequate funding.

- School leavers, particularly if unemployed, are a difficult group to reach. They need help on the psychological aspects of dealing with unemployment and on job search skills, as well as with the more customary components of multi-ethnic programs. In addition, providing them with some skill the market demands would be required. This suggests a more expensive and longer program than one that would target secondary school students (see below). More research would need to be done into the skills and problems of secondary school dropouts in order to determine program feasibility. The point here would be to address an audience that may be particularly susceptible to mobilization along ethnic lines.
- The team heard of one program in Gostiver, now completed, that targeted the children of social welfare families. The team liked the concept. The Gostivar branch of the Albanian Federation of

⁴⁴ It is worth noting that Search for Common Ground found efforts to work with younger party cadres to be futile.

Women, the Union of Women (an orthodox group) and a newer Turkish women's group managed the program.⁴⁵ They divided children into four age groups, from 5 to 15, and ran a four-month after-school program for each group. Staff used the different languages of the children and translation was provided when needed. In addition to working on ethnic harmony and providing tutoring, they worked on the psychological fears that result from their families' marginalized status. The women's organizations want to continue with the program but have not yet secured additional funding.

- Perhaps USAID could provide U.S. Bureau of the Census monitors for the next census, if needed. This would include monitoring design, survey planning and implementation, data entry and analysis.
- USAID should discuss with other donors the issue of Macedonian perceptions of Western favoritism toward the Albanian population. We understand that there is a donor group that meets periodically on inter-ethnic issues. It could be useful to raise this Macedonian perception with donors working in this area to figure out how to approach the problem. We do not think it should be ignored as irrelevant since the perception increases Macedonian feelings of vulnerability. All donors have programs that benefit the Macedonian population. It could simply be a matter of providing better public information about donor activities. It is also possible that if USAID wants to do more, it could direct a greater share of CSHI community efforts to the east, particularly in the very poor area bordering Bulgaria, even though these efforts currently are supposed to be limited to multiethnic communities. CSHI hopes to cover at least 100 communities so some significant share of these could be in Macedonian villages without damaging greatly the inter-ethnic purpose of the project.

Increasing Interaction between Ethnic Groups:

The team does not recommend efforts designed to bring individuals together to learn about each other for relatively short or even longer-term periods of time. While such efforts can increase tolerance, it is difficult to reach any sort of critical mass (even harder given geographic separation). Also, it is not clear that group conflicts are nothing more than the total of individual psychologies. Groups function according to their own rules.⁴⁶

- Target secondary schools (students, faculty and administrators) for joint inter-ethnic programs in mixed schools, where tensions often seem to run high. There are a number of projects that target youth, and the Ethnic Conflict Resolution Project (ECRP) has begun targeting schools. We think the institution may need to be targeted or there is a risk that teachers or peer-group pressure will undermine the effort. The team finds this an attractive target group for a few reasons: 1) they are old enough to be less influenced by prevailing family and societal norms – indeed, their age suggests they may be in revolt against many such norms⁴⁷; 2) they will soon go out into society and their decisions could have an impact on ethnic relations in the medium term; and 3) as noted

⁴⁵ This group was also funded by ISC for the development of a drug awareness program, which was finally adopted by the Gostivar local government. Paul Nuti noted that while the coalition came under severe strain during the Kosovo crisis, with several thousand refugees flooding the Gostivar area, it did manage to keep itself together.

⁴⁶ See H.D. Forbes, *Ethnic Conflict: Commerce, Culture and the Contact Hypothesis*, 1997, which does much to disprove the notion that increasing interaction, under certain conditions, can diminish conflict. The team has however seen evidence that such efforts around common goals do work in small communities.

⁴⁷ Research in the U.S. has shown that civic education programs which try to increase tolerance as well as knowledge of rights and responsibilities of citizenship have the greatest impact on eleventh graders.

elsewhere in this paper, they are prime targets for political mobilization around party and/or ethnic identity.

We believe that youth programs need to be structured in a manner that provides sustained interaction over the course of at least a couple of years; otherwise, there is a risk of diminishing returns as the participants become distant from the experience. There are useful models for the content of such programs. Generally, they include conflict resolution skills, trust-building exercises, learning about the culture of other groups, leadership training and some kind of community service project.

Other Possibilities:

- The team has come away with an impression that Macedonia may be less included in a variety of regional efforts targeting Central and Eastern Europe than are other countries such as Poland, Bulgaria, and Croatia. A quick review of conferences organized by the Princeton-based Project on Ethnic Relations seems to substantiate this. In another example, the region USAID-funded STAR project addressing women's rights involves Macedonia to a lesser extent than other Balkan countries and is just now getting underway in the country. Macedonia should be fully integrated into regional efforts that promote peace. While there may be no specific programming action for the mission to take here, raising this concern with other donors could perhaps be fruitful.

The Mechanics of Incorporating Conflict Prevention into the USAID Strategy:

The team advises against the creation of a special IR for inter-ethnic cooperation. While an IR does call attention to the mission's involvement in conflict prevention, it both "sidelines" the issue of ethnic conflict and creates a potentially difficult reporting burden. Developing practical indicators that do not overstate expected achievements would not be easy. We find most attractive the notion of treating conflict prevention more holistically, as a cross-cutting issue in the new strategy or as a major theme. While this approach does not avoid the need to report on progress, we think the burden would be lighter and the reporting more informative. For one thing, this approach would enable the mission to capture the impact that its economic and DG reform projects have in alleviating tensions. Once each year, the mission could hire a local expert to write a qualitative report that takes a serious look at the progress these various efforts are making and that also presents an update on interethnic relations.⁴⁸ This could be scheduled close to but not at R4 time. Extracts could be pulled from the report for the R4, and the entire report could be shared with interested Washington audiences.

IV. THE SPECIAL SITUATION OF THE ROMA

Since the two largest ethnic groups in Macedonia are seen as having a greater potential in triggering ethnic conflict, the socio-economic status and minority rights issues of other ethnic groups are often neglected. This is the case with the Roma population, which is estimated to be around 44,000, although that number may be larger since the Roma population is highly stigmatized and ethnic camouflage is probably significant. Ninety-five percent of the total Roma population live in towns and the suburbs of cities, often in run-down Roma ghettos. The largest Roma communities can be found in Skopje, Gostivar, Bitula, Kumanovo, and Prilep. Romas also sometimes live in mixed settlements, and those who do tend to have score better in terms of their socio-economic status and education level.

⁴⁸ Parameters for that reporting should probably be consistent over time and could be set up initially in consultation with USAID staff and (if needed) an external consultant. Some guidelines could be provided in this report, once USAID decides whether to add program elements.

All Roma communities in Central and Eastern Europe, estimated to be between 6 and 12 million, face two serious threats, violence and discrimination. The increase in violence followed the demise of communism. Roma are a convenient target for scape-goating in times of personal and collective insecurity because of their marginalized position in society, their lack of political representation, and deep-rooted negative attitudes held by majority populations. Direct and indirect discrimination against Roma is widespread across the region, evident in the biased treatment of Roma in the media which promulgates negative images of Roma, mistreatment and discriminatory practices in the workplace, in schools, and health services, and denial of access to public institutions. Roma have also been subject to “racial profiling” practices by the police and customs officers at airports and borders.

Discrimination has led to increasing mobilization on the part of Roma populations all over Central and Eastern Europe, and Roma political elites are emerging on national and regional levels. The European Union, the Council of Europe, and the OSCE implement special programs of assistance for Roma. Several European governments have taken first steps to recognize Romani cultural and political rights. Moreover, the upsurge of violence has resulted in the growth of Roma NGOs which primarily focus on three issues-areas: human, civil, and minority rights; political organization; and community development.

Although Roma are almost 99% Muslim, ethnic Albanians in Macedonia have the most negative attitudes toward Roma, and religion is not an important factor in facilitating any inter-group solidarity. Given their low socio-economic and political status, and the extremely negative attitudes on the part of other ethnic groups in Macedonia, Roma have few channels to voice their grievances and to vent their frustrations.

At least portions of Macedonia’s Roma population had tried to assimilate into Macedonian society, demonstrated by their adoption of the language of other ethnic groups. In Gostivar and Kitcevo, for example, Roma speak Macedonian as their principal language. In Debar, 95% of the Roma speak Albanian. In the four Roma areas in Tetovo, the language patterns are mixed. In one Roma community, Turkish is spoken; in the second one, Albanian; and in another one Macedonian. Roma is spoken only in one community in Tetovo. Some Roma communities no longer speak any Roma.

The Roma remain positioned at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder. They are the least educated, are outside the channels of social mobility, and are forced into the most unpleasant and least respected jobs. Unemployment among the Roma community is very high. In Gostivar, for example, 80% of unemployed Roma are on social welfare. The level of socio-economic development of Roma is also linked to the economic development of the region in which they live. Research studies conducted by the Institute for Sociological, Political, and Juridical Research show that Roma children, given their disadvantaged societal status, have very low self-esteem. They are the most likely of all ethnic groups to drop out of primary school because of discrimination by teachers. Many Roma children never begin secondary school, due to family economic difficulties or teacher prejudices. For example, of the 100 Roma children finishing the 8th grade (elementary schooling to this grade is mandatory) in Gostivar, only three went to secondary school. However, a few successes are noted. In 1996, only 15 Roma students entered university. This number has now grown to 70, after a four-year campaign to increase the percentage of Roma students in college.

Roma in Macedonia cannot provoke political instability, but they deserve particular attention because their situation represents a serious human rights concern. Virtually every other ethnic group discriminates against the Roma. They are most often targeted in the outbursts of racial violence, although such incidents are less frequent and less serious than elsewhere in the region. As such, increasing the level of tolerance towards them is important and implies establishing higher standards for inter-ethnic behavior that then apply across the board.

Like any other ethnic group in Macedonia, the Roma population is also organized into their own ethnic political party, which later splintered into two parties. Since the first elections held in Macedonia, the

Roma have had an MP, and since then, the mayor of the largest Roma municipality, Suto Orizari, is Roma himself. This political participation is not insignificant since the ethnic group's demands and grievances can be voiced, even in limited fashion, on the institutional level. Nevertheless, the treatment of the Roma people by the Macedonian police remains notoriously bad. Also, a large number of Roma have their citizenship status still unresolved. Although largely settled, they remained very mobile in the former Yugoslavia and the introduction of the international borders between republics of the former federation has taken members of Roma communities by surprise. Moreover, during the Kosovo crisis, many of the refugees that came to Macedonia were also Roma. Many appear to have stayed. They have no legal status and no ability to access the welfare services of the state, despite their vulnerability.

This highly unfavorable situation of the Roma population has led to the organization of many self-help initiatives within the Roma community. With substantial assistance from donor organizations, especially the Open Society Institute, a large number of projects have been undertaken to improve the socio-economic position of Roma in Macedonia. Between 1994-99, about fifty Roma NGOs were formed which are engaged primarily in status-enhancing projects. Lessons learnt from other regions in Eastern Europe with substantial Roma populations indicate that such status-enhancing strategies that focus on education, women's emancipation, human rights advocacy, and material assistance are the preferred model of NGOs active with Roma minorities. They are also seen as the most likely to contribute to the improvement and the strengthening of the position of Romas in society.

NGOs that address the needs of the Roma population in Macedonia can be roughly divided into two groups: the monitoring of Roma human rights, and the improvement of the socio-economic position of Roma communities. It is important to stress that most of these NGOs are set up and run by the members of the local Roma communities. Mesecina, a Roma humanitarian organization with branches in Gostivar, Kicevo, Debar, and Tetovo, for examples, is involved in educational and women's emancipation projects but also defends the rights of Roma by using the legal system. It runs its own legal office and legal cases brought to the courts have involved police brutality against Roma and discrimination suffered by Roma on the part of school and local government officials. The Skopje-based Helsinki Committee for Human Rights also works with Mesecina on three cases of discrimination involving police brutality and the discrimination against Roma Jehovah's Witnesses. The Committee has also worked on awareness raising concerning rights issues within Roma communities, in the hope that the Roma will bring more cases much earlier in the process. Such human rights efforts on the part of Roma organizations and the Helsinki Committee are important because the low socio-economic status of Roma prevents them often from defending themselves or from making demands on the state.

As in the case of non-Roma related NGOs, the value of the Roma NGO sector is a mixed blessing as well. Lessons learned from other Central and Eastern European regions indicate that projects on Roma-related issues "can become an end in themselves, often consuming great amounts of time and aid but producing only modest results or none at all. Even more dangerous, some states have used NGO activities to pull back from implementing commitments on Romani-related matters. The NGO sector cannot substitute provisions and activities by the state. That is, without state participation in solving the problems of the Roma, change cannot be expected in the near future."⁴⁹

Strategies in the region often stress the socio-economic and educational uplift of the Roman people. There are so many disparities between the Roma and other groups that this feeds stereotypes. Efforts do need to address disparities but also to focus on human rights issues, the inclusion of Roma in all efforts to promote peaceful coexistence between ethnic groups, and wider public awareness of the damaging nature of stereotypes. Some countries have instituted Roma government ombudsman, who serves as a focal point for Roma complaints about discrimination. This could be a strategy that would be useful in

⁴⁹ Project on Ethnic Relations, "The Roma in the Twenty-First Century: A Policy," May 1997.

Macedonia, particularly because the Roma cannot easily seek solutions from political parties, although generally it is used in countries where the Roma population is much larger.

Most important, lessons learned from other regions emphasize that “more concrete and long-term actions must be taken, especially by the governments of the countries in the region.” Such government-sponsored actions must focus on the implementation of preventive measures. In a workshop conducted in 1997 by the Project on Ethnic Relations, participants stressed two types of approaches, civil society approaches and legal and administrative mechanisms. Civil-society approaches have “an indirect, yet indispensable, role in prevention,” and include the following activities: educating Roma on their human and civil rights and mechanisms to redress grievances and violations; systemic monitoring, investigating and reporting on cases of violence and discrimination; and providing effective legal remedies for addressing abuses. Legal and administrative mechanisms include programs initiated by individual governments and ministries, and laws that are directed toward violent and discriminatory acts. In Romania, for example, an Office for the Integration of Roma, was created within the Department for the Protection of National Minorities. Other countries have programs designed to increase Roma employment and educational opportunities. What is most important is that the enforcement of laws against violence and discrimination provide for punishment, and provide victims with moral and material compensation.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Project on Ethnic Relations, “Prevention of Violence and Discrimination Against Roma in Central and Eastern Europe,” March 1997.

Annex A
Scope of Work
AEP-I-00-99-00040, T.O. #809

1.1 TITLE

Activity Title:

Title: Ethnic Relations Assessment

1.2 OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this study is to gather together sufficient information on the status of the major ethnic groups in Macedonia to assist USAID/Macedonia to identify areas of intervention that could facilitate harmony between these groups. Macedonia is a newly independent country, part of the former Yugoslavia, and a significant part of its estimated 2 million inhabitants are Albanian Muslims and Roma. The majority are Orthodox Christians. Macedonia shares a border with Kosovo, but so far does not share its ethnic problems. It is vital to the stability of this region that Macedonia maintain its ability to coexist peacefully with its three ethnic groups.

1.3 STATEMENT OF WORK

The contractors shall undertake a review of the existing studies that are available within Macedonia or Washington on the ethnic Albanian and Roma groups. Special attention should be paid to gender issues within this context. USAID is particularly interested to know of lessons learned and success stories dealing with ethnic conflict within the region or in other similar areas. The contractor should also include a review of donor activities aimed at ethnic groups. To extent possible, this study should result in a preliminary identification of the main areas that now cause tension between the minorities and the Christian Orthodox.

After completing a review of the literature, the contractor, at his or her discretion, but with the general agreement of USAID, may opt to undertake some limited interviews with key players to finalize lacks or gaps in written information. In all cases the study should be oriented towards economic or civil society-type issues amenable to interventions by a donor. Contractor may wish to hold a general roundtable discussion with selected authorities to discuss these issues as a means of gathering further information and key names to contract. USAID will assist in organizing such a meeting shortly after his/her arrival.

Specific types of interventions that USAID would like information about include activities that might incorporate minority women better into the economy or assist in their empowerment; activities that on a community level could contribute to easing ethnic tensions and promoting peaceful coexistence.

1.3.1 SPECIFIC TASKS/DELIVERABLES

1. Review of studies existing about ethnic groups in Macedonia, with particular emphasis on sources of tension between the groups. These sources of tension should be prioritized, to the extent possible.
2. Review of activities that have been tried in the region, or, to a lesser extent, in other similar areas, and lessons learned, success stories.

3. Overview of donor-funded activities addressing ethnic harmony within Macedonia.
4. Thorough description of the ethnic minorities existing in Macedonia, their geographic distribution, major issues affecting their integration into Macedonian society. Special attention should be paid to gender issues.
5. Recommendations for a cohesive strategy that AID could undertake to address some of the major issues affecting relations between the ethnic groups, taking into account the areas in which USAID is already involved.
6. Recommendations of a specific Intermediate Result and some performance measures that could be adopted by USAID to track improvements in ethnic relations. These measures should include present USAID activities addressing ethnic harmony, as well as suggested new ones, making a new results package.

1.3.2 METHODOLOGY

The Contractor should spend one week in the US before departing for Macedonia researching studies that have been done in Southeastern Europe region on ethnic issues, particularly on activities that have had some success in alleviating ethnic tensions and creating more harmony between majority and minority groups.

On arrival in Skopje, contractor should visit other donors and collect any existing studies that have been done on the various ethnic minorities, as well as any existing evaluations. He/she should also become familiar with the USAID program and the activities we support that contribute to ethnic harmony. This should take about one week.

After collecting all existing materials, the contractor should brief USAID on information available and preliminary conclusions about causes of tension. S/he should then suggest where gaps exist and submit to SUAID any questions to be asked and a list of suggested interviews to be held. Two or three days should be devoted to interviews.

The final report should contain the deliverables listed above, as well as recommendations for interventions that could alleviate some of the major issues identified by the contractor. It should not exceed 25 pages and should have an executive summary of not more than three pages.

Annex B

Existing Efforts to Improve Ethnic Relations and Lessons Learned

In addition to various programs supported by individual governments and regional organizations, there are also those funded or implemented by international and domestic NGOs. There are also some indigenous organizations that are not registered as NGOs but are informal initiatives among particular interest groups, such as the two women's organizations Antiko and the Macedonian Women's Lobby. There are also a few human rights organizations, such as the Helsinki Commission on Human Rights, which monitors human rights violations such as police brutality. Unlike the networking strategies emphasized by international and local NGOs to facilitate interaction among ethnic communities, Roma organizations tend to use status-raising strategies to advance the political and socio-economic level of the Roma population. In addition to these more applied efforts, many academics are engaged in research and polling on inter-ethnic issues.

Project activities can be divided into four categories: (1) research, particularly attitudinal; (2) projects that introduce civic education into the schools; (3) those that focus on bringing individuals together from different ethnic groups, and that primarily are directed toward the societal level; and (4) those that work primarily with political elites. In second category, there are many indigenous efforts to introduce civic education at both the primary and the secondary level. The current Minister of Education seems fairly open to such efforts. Most programs are still at the fairly early stages, testing curricula, training teachers, and discovering the impact before proceeding to a roll-out. In the third category, most of the projects are common-needs, common-interest, or issue-oriented. These include women's projects on health education, community development, or environmental protection. Other projects on the societal level involve the training of print and broadcasting journalists, conflict management skills training for children, high school students, and young adults, the development of parent-teacher association, the production of interethnic radio and television programs, and the establishment of interethnic kindergartens. The fourth category of activities are intended to bring together political elites, primarily on the national, and even regional levels, mostly in roundtables and other forums over brief periods of time.

The premise of many activities is that shared information and contact can decrease conflict by increasing understanding. As noted earlier in this report, this premise is open to question.⁵¹ Even if one accepts the premise, there is a fundamental difficulty in terms of reaching a critical mass of people. It is not certain how long the good effects last in the absence of institutions that routinely bring people together in non-conflictual ways.

Lessons learnt from programs in other countries and in Macedonia suggest that there are limits to many of the networking strategies emphasized by international and local NGOs. These are as follows: (1) interactive efforts require long-term intervention and those organized around a short-term effort appear to have fewer residual effects; (2) differential status and power asymmetries will affect the results; (3) the benefits of working with very young children over short periods of time are unclear as they return to their communities which may hold negative stereotypes of the "other"⁵²; (4) while there are a fair number of

⁵¹ See the H.D. Forbes book, *Ethnic Conflict*, 1997.

⁵² An assessment study of the Conflict Resolution Games (CRG) in Macedonian Schools conducted by Pierre LeBlanc from the Canadian International Institute of Applied Negotiation underscores some of the above mentioned limits that interactive projects have with regards to improving ethnic relations, but also shows some potential return on such programs. Conducted in April 2000, the assessment evaluated the impact of the CRG program on fourth-grade and sixth grade students in three of the participating schools. Of the three schools that were evaluated, the first was in Skopje, a second one in the ethnic Albanian rural community of Golema Recica, and a third in the city of Veles. The CRG curriculum was developed by Professor Violeta Beska, and designed and tested in 1995/1996 by

dialogue building efforts among national elites (particularly at higher levels, less may be done for mid-level cadres), encounters that are brief may have very limited impact; (5) interactive community efforts tend to work best where relations are already good or at least adequate; and (6) channels of communication do not necessarily continue after projects come to an end. More anecdotal evidence collected by the team suggest though that long-term attitudinal changes can sometimes take place, that relationships created in various interactive projects do sometimes last past the initial workshop or activity, and that particularly women tend to start new activities or organizations after they participated in empowerment projects.

Interviews conducted by the team also revealed that very few local NGOs in Macedonia are truly mixed and often give only lip-service to being multiethnic in character or being engaged in multiethnic projects in order to secure donor funding. The coordinator of a woman's NGO however explained that the development of multiethnic NGOs should not be expected to come about naturally, given the levels of ethnic stratification in society. Local NGO coordinators also voiced several other concerns: (1) the lack of cooperation between NGOs and local governments; and (2) lack of incentives to get people to participate in projects.

List of Organizations Addressing Conflict Prevention and Mitigation (Representatives Interviewed)

Albanian League of Women

- Type: Domestic; based in Tetovo with local chapters
 Projects: Women's Issues Oriented
- Women's participation in political office
 - Educating women as voters
 - Health and educational projects related to women

the Ethnic Conflict Resolution Project (ECRP) at the University of Skopje. After being run as a pilot project first, the CRG program was intended to be implemented in twenty-five new schools per year for three years, and reached a total of sixty-three schools by 1998/1999. During the time of the study, there were still fifty-two schools engaged in the project. The CRG program is an extra-curricular educational project, and is not integrated into the regular Macedonian curriculum. Nearly 20,000 students have participated in the CRG program since its inception. Three objectives characterize the CRG program: to develop children's awareness as to the causes of conflicts and strategies to resolve them; to enable children to see and internalize non-violent reactions to conflict; and, to contribute to the development of a community with open communication and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The CRG program also teaches children skills to engage in more efficient social integration, and to value cooperation, tolerance, positive emotional expression, and active listening. The assessment study evaluated the degree to which the CRG program had fulfilled these objectives. The following key findings on the effectiveness of the CRG program were revealed in the evaluation report. On the one hand "participating students are significantly more expressive and able to deal with conflict much more effectively than their non-participating counterparts." Moreover, psychologists reported that they still saw positive effects from the conflict resolution training with students in the seventh grade, and that this educational program fostered teamwork and cooperation, and taught students to communicate, express their feelings, and learn to manage conflict in a more constructive way. However, several limits were apparent which support some of the general conclusions drawn from other studies. For example, while children seem to apply their learned skills of non-violent reactions to conflict outside the classroom, they do so to varying degrees. There is also a direct correlation between the ability and willingness to resort to conflict resolution skills and the length of time spent away from the CRG program. In other words, the frequency of applying conflict resolution skills learned in the classroom drastically reduced the longer children were no longer participants in the program.

Almatova

- Type: Domestic, based in Skopje, founded by director of Center for Roma NGOs
Projects: Multiethnic club for youth in their early to mid twenties
- Internet café
 - Social events
 - Reported in early October to be breaking up

Antiko

- Type: Domestic; Informal Women's Organization
Projects: Women's Issues Oriented
- Monthly or bi-monthly workshops focusing on women's issues (e.g., education; health issues; emancipation of women; increasing women's participation in political office; conflict resolution training)

Catholic Relief Service

- Type: U.S.
Projects: Community-Building Oriented; Long-term Conflict Management
- Parents-Students project (PSP)
 - Civil education in kindergarten, primary and secondary schools, and
 - Pedagogical Institute
 - Funding for the creation of the Center for Mutual Understanding and Cooperation
 - Summer camps for children from different ethnic backgrounds
 - Support for Roma NGOs

Center for Mutual Understanding and Cooperation

- Type: Domestic; Based in Skopje
Projects: Network-Oriented
- Young journalists' training project
 - Training of young activists
 - Women in rural areas project (e.g., Education in Democracy)

Center for Roma NGOs

- Type: Domestic, based in Skopje
Projects: Institutional strengthening support to Roma NGOs

Community Self Help Initiative

- Type: U.S.
Projects: Community Development Oriented;
- Infrastructure development (e.g. Water supply systems; building of new schools; building of sports facilities)
 - Support for women's organizations
 - Support for health issue projects

Ethnic Conflict Resolution Project

- Type: Domestic; Based at the University of Skopje, Faculty of Philosophy
Projects: Network Building; Training in Communication and Conflict Resolution/Prevention; Research on inter-ethnic relations
- Conflict resolution games for primary school children

- Conflict resolution training for high school students and university students
- Curriculum development for conflict resolution projects
- Bringing high school students from different ethnic groups together (e.g., summer camps)

Foundation Kiro Gligorov

- Type: Domestic; Based in Skopje
- Projects: On-going and Planned Activities; Mainly Elite-Oriented;
- Conflict resolution workshops for regional leaders
 - Television programs on inter-ethnic subjects with discussions
 - Projects that promote Macedonia as a model of peaceful coexistence

Institute for Sustainable Development

- Type: U.S.;
- Projects: Community-Building Oriented
- Grant-making support for local NGOs, including women's NGOs with proposals funded for projects on disability rights, building of grass-roots environmental organizations, democracy and participation-building, children's rights;

Interethnic Project Gostivar

- Type: Dutch-funded; Domestic; Based in Gostivar
- Projects: Community-Building Oriented
- Grant-making support for local groups for projects related to the community (eg., drug abuse; handicapped people)

International Center for Preventive Action and Conflict Resolution

- Type: Domestic; Based at the University of Skopje, Faculty of Law
- Projects: Planned Activities; Elite and Faculty/Student Oriented
- Roundtable on inter-ethnic relations
 - Program on conflict prevention and conflict resolution education and training
 - Program on regional stability and cooperation

Kvinna Till Kvinna

- Type: Swedish;
- Projects: Women's' Issues Oriented
- Grant making support to local women's NGOs (e.g. Antiko; the Struga-based Ariola; START; Women's Center in Kumanovo; branches of the Albanian League of Women; Roma organizations)—domestic violence, health education, handicapped women; women's participation in politics; women's emancipation; women's rights;

Macedonian Women's Lobby

- Type: Domestic; Based in Skopje; Informal Women's Organization
- Projects:
- Increase of women in political leadership positions
 - Education of women as voters

Mesecina

- Type: Domestic; Based in Gostivar; Roma-focused;
Projects: Status-enhancing;
- Promotion of education and providing materials for primary and high school students
 - Emancipation of women
 - Additional education for Roma
 - Human rights protection
 - Skills training projects (e.g., computer and languages; shoe mending; sewing)
 - Institutional support for other Roma NGOS
 - Emergency aid for refugees

Nansen Dialogue Center

- Type: Norwegian; regional centers throughout Balkans
Projects: Conflict Resolution Oriented;
- Seminars on peaceful conflict resolution and human rights for young adults (18-30 years)
 - Training of trainers workshops
 - Provide limited logistical support to local NGOs

National Democratic Institute

- Type: U.S.
Projects: Political Systems Building
- projects working with political parties in parliament (e.g., professional ethics; professional research staff; education of MPs to serve constituency; independence of parliament)

Open Society Institute Macedonia

- Type: U.S. based, with regional offices throughout Central and Eastern Europe
Projects: Improvement of inter-ethnic relations; media projects; scholarships; educational projects; support for Roma organizations/projects
- Improving Ethnic Relations Project: grants to local NGOs working on inter-ethnic relations
 - Ohrid Summer School 2000 (some sessions deal with ethnic issues)
 - grants to women's groups (must be from at least two different ethnic groups)
 - Roma educational support and NGO development
 - small grants (under \$1000) for inter-ethnic education in high schools
 - media support: Romani mass media programs, better information on the Kosovo crisis, multiethnic media reporting in at least two languages

Organization of Women in Development

- Type: Domestic; Based in Tetovo
Projects: Women's Issues Oriented
- Family violence
 - Women in rural areas

Search for Common Ground in Macedonia

Type: U.S.

Projects: Network building; conflict resolution; media training; education

- Interethnic kindergarten, Mosaik
- Nashe Maalo, television series for children on tolerance building, conflict prevention, and conflict resolution
- documentary series on methods of conflict resolution and prevention
- conflict resolution games (with the Ethnic Conflict Resolution Project)
- Training seminar for print media journalists and editors
- 1998 Election coverage—voters information
- Interethnic radio projects
- Public service campaign to encourage tolerance during the 1998 parliamentary election campaign

Star

Type: Domestic; Regional centers through former Yugoslavia

Projects: planned; Women-Issues Oriented

- Roundtables for women in local government, political parties, unions, and NGOs with focus on specific needs of women (eg., running for political office)

Annex C

Key Informants

USAID/Washington

Mike Crosswell, PPC
Corbin Lyday, E&E
Bill Renison, PPC
Mary Ann Riegelman, E&E
Lawrence Robertson, E&E

Others in the U.S.:

Keith Brown, former senior fellow at USIP, Research Fellow, Brown University
Sue Dwyer, former director of an NGO development project in Bosnia
Valere (Chip) Gagnon, Ithaca College
Lidija Georgieva, University of Maryland, Center for International and Security Studies and University of Skopje
Brad Heckman, Partners for Democratic Change
Michael Lund, MSI
Andrew Loomis, Search for Common Ground
Anthony Oberschall, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Enrique Roig, Mercy Corps
Rebecca Sewell, former gender adviser to E&E Bureau
Marina Skrabulo, World Learning and Center for Peace Studies (Zagreb)
David Steele, Center for Strategic and International Studies and Center for Religious Dialogue (Sarajevo)

In Macedonia:

Teuta Arifi, Faculty of Literature, University of Skopje
Ylza Adami, Interethnic Project in Gostivar (IPG)
Catherine Barnes, IFES
Violeta Beska, Ethnic Conflict Resolution Project, University of Skopje
Dan Blessington, IFES
Christina X, Organization of Woman from Gostivar (Macedonian women's NGO)
Igor Dzundev, Center for Ethnic Relations (government foundation)
J. Michael Einik, U.S. Ambassador to Macedonia
Albert Fatahi, Interethnic Project in Gostivar
Eran Frankel, Search for Common Ground
Steve Gagnea, USAID
Saso Georgievski, Acting Director of the International Center for Preventive Action and Conflict Resolution
Albert Hani, Nansen Dialogue Center
Sami Ibrahim, Under-Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador-designate to Denmark
Gazmend Idini, TV Era (Skopje Albanian TV station)
Aferdita Imeri, Star project coordinator
Murtezan Ismaili, Mayor of Tetovo
Boriana Jonssen, Kvinna till Kvinna (Women to Women, Swedish organization)

Edith Johnson, CRS
 Gazmend Kadriu, economist, MCIC
 Jim Kaiser, Community Self-Help Initiative, Louis Berger
 Eleonora Karanfilovska, Executive Secretary, Gligorov Foundation
 Nikolena Kenig, University of Skopje
 Tanya Kikerekova, Civil and Minorities Rights Department, Ministry of Justice
 Dona Kolar-Panov, Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research
 Hasbia Mehmedova, Center for Roma NGOs, founder of ALMATOVA (a mixed ethnic club for youth 20-26)
 Vladimir Milcin, Open Society Institute
 Tochi Mohammed, Mesecina (Gostivar branch)
 Walbona Morena, CRS
 Ibrahim Mehmeti, Search for Common Ground
 Xheladin Murati, Pedagogical Faculty, University of Skopje
 Mirjana Nagcevska, Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research
 Ismaili Nebi, Mesecina (Gostivar branch)
 Guner Nebiu, Albanian League of Women, Antiko
 Paul Nuti, Institute for Sustainable Communities
 Jan Pandinga, Dutch Embassy
 Lilyana Popovska, Macedonian Women's Lobby
 Andreas Raab, OSCE
 Isaaq Ramadani, VOA correspondent
 Afrodita Sala, USAID
 Skenderi Samet, Mesecina (Roma NGO)
 Nafi Saracini, EU Phare
 Harald Schenker, OSCE
 Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, former Minister of Local Government, Faculty of Law, University of Skopje
 Emilija Simovska, Center for Ethnic Relations, Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research (former Minister of Education)
 Aferdita Skenderi, Women in Development (Albanian NGO in Tetovo)
 Artan Skenderi, TV Art (Albanian TV station in Tetovo)
 Henryk Sokalski, USIP senior fellow, former chief of mission of UNPREDEP
 Charles Stonecipher, US Embassy
 Richard Stoddard, NDI
 Ilo Trajkovski, Department of Sociology, University of Skopje
 Albert Van Hal, Interethnic Project in Gostivar
 Kelmand Zajazi, Institute for Sustainable Communities

Annex D

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